February 16, 2017

The Honorable Phil Roe
United States House of Representatives
336 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4201

Dear Representative Roe:

On behalf of more than 2.2 million members of The American Legion, we express support for the draft bill entitled the *Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act*. This draft bill, as currently written, would prohibit the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from considering any beneficiary assisted by a fiduciary as "mentally defective" without a magistrate or judicial authority ruling that the beneficiary is a public danger.

Veterans are not required to give up their weapons for the purpose of receiving VA health care for mental health conditions. However, there are concerns that the threat of being placed on a list that might deny veterans their Second Amendment rights could act as a deterrent for those who might otherwise seek treatment for their mental health conditions. The American Legion's concern is that stigmas associated with mental illnesses may force a veteran to lose their Second Amendment rights.

The American Legion reaffirms its recognition that the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms; and, that the membership of The American Legion urges our nation's lawmakers to recognize, as part of their oaths of office, that the Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear arms of their choice, as do the millions of American veterans who have fought, and continue to fight, to preserve those rights; hereby advise the Congress of the United States and the Executive Department to cease and desist any and all efforts to restrict these right by any legislation or order.

In conclusion, The American Legion applauds your leadership in addressing issues that are important to America's servicemembers, veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. SCHMIDT
National Commander