July 13, 2015

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
1318 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Wenstrup,

On behalf of the over 2 million members of The American Legion, I would like to express our support for the *VA Provider Equity Act.* This legislation, as written would address the recruitment and retention challenges that the Department of Veterans Affairs has regarding pay disparities among those physicians who are providing direct health care to our nation's veterans. This bill would specifically place podiatrists within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) on the same pay schedule as VA physicians and provide them the same promotional and leadership opportunities they often hold in private sector healthcare systems. By doing this VA will be able to attract and retain more experienced podiatrists to treat our nation's veterans.

One of the areas VA consistently struggles with is recruiting and retention of certain health care providers to include podiatrists. This change would put a podiatrist in the same classification as all other physicians which would assist VA in recruiting and retaining qualified podiatrists to treat those veterans suffering with lower extremity issues.

The American Legion supports the *VA Provider Equity Act* and applauds your leadership in addressing this critical issue facing our nation's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Helm
National Commander
The American Legion