The American Legion

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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August 10, 2016

Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

The American Legion would like to thank you for your continued commitment to ending veteran homelessness. As the end of the fiscal year approaches, we urge you to adjust the authorization caps for VA's Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) and the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Programs in any legislative efforts you may be making to address expiring program authorities for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nationwide, the number of homeless veterans has declined by 47 percent since 2009. Tremendous progress has been made but in 2016, nearly 40,000 veterans experienced homelessness on any given night in the U.S. We know what works, and have seen two states and 27 communities effectively end veteran homelessness.

As you know, the conference report accompanying H.R.2577, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, includes $320 million in fiscal year 2017 for the SSVF program, $20 million above the president's budget request, and $257.5 million for the GPD program, $10 million above the president's budget request. However; the SSVF program is only authorized through the end of fiscal year (FY) 2016, and the GPD program is permanently authorized at $250 million.

We agree with the appropriations subcommittees of both Chambers that providing additional resources for, and expanding access to, these critical VA programs would allow communities to end veteran homelessness sooner. The American Legion has seen first had that adequate funding from Congress can end veteran homelessness. **We request that you continue to invest in proven solutions that end homelessness. More specifically, The American Legion urges you to authorize an appropriation of $257.5 million for GPD in FY 2017, and $320 million for SSVF in FY 2017.** Thank you for your continued commitment to serving veterans and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

DALE BARNETT
National Commander