



# Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute

## Strengthening Care for Veterans and the Nation

**For Immediate Release: VHPI Supports Sane Effort to End the AIR Commission**

June 28, 2022

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA ~ The Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute (VHPI) — a non-profit, non-partisan think tank focused on improving the delivery of care and benefits to America’s 19 million veterans — strongly supports the bipartisan group of U.S. Senators who yesterday [announced](#) that they will block efforts to shutter hospitals run by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

**“VHPI is honored and humbled to have provided Senators and other stakeholders with detailed and effective analyses uncovering why VA’s Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission should be shut down, as well as why VA must be saved from privatization,”** said Suzanne Gordon, a Senior Policy Analyst for VHPI.

**“Former servicemembers, VA employee unions, and veteran advocacy organizations strongly support the end of the AIR Commission — a Trojan Horse to close hospitals used by nearly six million veterans each year. Recommendations to shutter VA hospitals were based on outdated and politically motivated information. According to information prepared by VHPI and shared with Congress, these proposals would have been particularly catastrophic in rural areas,”** added Gordon, author of the book, “Wounds of War: How the VA Delivers Health, Healing and Hope to the Nation’s Veterans.”

VHPI is a leading national organization fighting against VA privatization. The effort to carve up VA has been led by corporate healthcare interests, reactionary politicians, and Koch-backed groups, not VA patients.

VHPI remains distressed that, next year, VA’s spending on private sector healthcare will consume up to one-third of its entire medical care budget. Instead of outsourcing care to private sector doctors and hospitals — which, [studies document](#), too often deliver low quality care at

high cost — VHPI supports fully funding the VA, promptly filling thousands of vacant positions, and curtailing privatization. Our veterans have earned the right to a safe, reliable, consistent, and fully integrated source of healthcare.

Now that the distraction of the AIR Commission is over, VA urgently needs strong and constructive Congressional proposals, including those that address the ongoing tragedy of veteran suicide, and that support our two million female veterans as they face reproductive health threats in the wake of the Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Casey* decision.

The VA, more fundamentally, must receive sufficient and ongoing support. The U.S. military has been at war for decades and remains in conflict in at least 85 locations. This produces a [steady stream of casualties. Due to more frequent deployments, today's veterans face an unprecedented number of complex medical disabilities.](#)

**“The right thing to do is [fully fund and staff VA with more dedicated employees.](#) VHPI agrees with veterans who reject efforts to use more expensive, much slower, and far less culturally competent care in the private sector. VHPI stands ready and able to provide objective reports and otherwise assist Congress with identifying ways to preserve, protect, and promote the kind of quality VA care that our veterans earned defending our Constitution,”** said Paul Cox, a Vietnam Veteran and President of VHPI.

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