

## Schilling Testified In Support of Veterans' Health Care Legislation

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Washington, DC – Congressman Bobby Schilling (IL-17) and a number of his colleagues testified yesterday before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health in support of various pieces of legislation relating to health care for American war veterans. Schilling in December introduced H.R. 3723, the Enhanced Veteran Health Care Experience Act.

"I truly believe you can tell a lot about a country by the way it treats its veterans," Schilling said in his testimony. "I'm pursuing this legislation in large part because of the many constituents who constantly share their stories of having to drive long distances while experiencing substantial wait times in an effort to make sure they can get the health care they need. But I also experienced this in my own family when helping to take care of my father – who served in Korea – near the end of his life. We had to drive several hours to and from Iowa City for him to get the care he needed. While we appreciated the service and the care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, I also believe that we must continue to make improvements for our veterans."

This legislation would allow, but not require, veterans to use fee-based care in their home towns with their own doctors. Under the current veterans' health care system, veterans are shuttled back and forth between the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and their local doctors' offices, bound by the red tape that exists in the fee-based care system administered by the VA. This red tape only exacerbates working with their local doctors' offices to receive the health care they need. While increasing the ease with which veterans can receive care, studies and statements by the Government Accountability Office, Office of the Inspector General, and Veterans Service Organizations suggest that implementing the changes in this bill will create savings for the VA and address medical care concerns that veterans have when working with the VA fee-based care system.

"This idea is near and dear to me, and has received a positive response from veterans I have spoken with in my district," Schilling said in his testimony. "The Congressional process is in place so that we can perfect legislation. That is what I am working to do on this bill. Since H.R. 3723's inception and also from its introduction, I have continued to work with Veteran Service Organizations to address their concerns. I hope to continue to do this with the VSOs and the Committee."

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