

Omnibus Bill Omits VA Program Improvements

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WASHINGTON — Congressional leaders reached a deal Wednesday to fund the federal government through Sept. 30, the end of fiscal year 2018, but the \$1.3 trillion omnibus package omitted many improvements that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. had sought for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The improvements would have consolidated and reformed VA's community care programs, expanded family caregiver support to pre-9/11 veterans, and better aligned VA's infrastructure to its main mission of delivering quality care to veterans. The improvements are what the VFW has advocated for in the past, to include just this week, in [a letter addressed to the majority and minority leadership](#) of the House and Senate.

"Everyone in Congress constantly brags that taking care of veterans is a nonpartisan issue, so I have to ask why Congress wouldn't support improving the VA Choice Program, or allow more family caregivers to access VA support programs, or to improve and realign VA's aging infrastructure that still has to be maintained at taxpayer expense?" said VFW National Commander Keith Harman.

"The VFW is very disappointed but we will continue to work with House VA Committee Chairman Phil Roe and Ranking Member Tim Walz, and Senate VA Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson and Ranking Member Jon Tester, to bring these important issues to fruition," he said, "because the needs are not going away."

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