

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT, APRIL, 2019

by

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1. As of this writing, there are now 49 cosponsors for H. R. 96, that would require the VA to treat dental care the same as other medical specialties. With one exception (Cong. Reed, NY), all of the cosponsors for H. R. 4556 (predecessor bill in the previous congress) who are still in congress, have signed on to the new bill. We still need more cosponsors, so do whatever you can.

2. WBBM Radio's Felicia Middlebrooks has an interesting daily quote (Thought for the Day). A recent one was: "No response is a response, and it's a powerful one." I looked up this quote, and while it is well-known, I was unable to find its originator.

It has been our experience, that some congressional staffers have been ignoring our requests for cosponsors. I encountered this with Cong. Adam Kinzinger's staffer, so I once again emailed him, using this quote and saying that as veterans, that we deserved a response. He promptly responded, saying that Kinzinger is not on the Veterans Affairs Cmte., and that he has not taken an opinion on the bill. While we did not get a cosponsor here, we at least got a reply.

I then tried this strategy on Cong. Mike Bost's staffer, Noah Barger. Bost is one of the first congressmen that we tried to get, because this Marine vet has been a staunch supporter of veterans. I often said publicly that writing to Barger was like writing to Santa Claus. This strategy got a reply. They were concerned with the cost and whether the VA had the capacity to provide this dental care. At least we finally got a reply. Therefore, we will use this strategy when we are ignored in the future.

3. As a result of my meeting with Alderman Gilbert Villegas, the Chicago City Council unanimously approved the resolution (that I drafted) to urge the Illinois Congressional Delegation to support H. R. 96.

4. On April 24, the Cook County Board will vote on a similar resolution. Mark Weiman and I will speak on behalf of the resolution.

As for getting the County Care program (a medicaid program granting care to Cook County residents, including the undocumented, whose assets are below \$2,000) to provide dental care to vets, it does not appear to be a possibility at this point, as it involves federal dollars, even though it is administered by the County.

5. The America's Heroes Group program, that airs Saturdays on WVON (AM 1690), is now two hours long (1600-1800). On May 4, Mark Weiman and I will be interviewed in the last half hour.

6. The DAV's legislative office says that they will spam out one of their legislative alerts on H. R. 96 in the future. They currently have other bills that they are pushing.