



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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November 26, 2014

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
United States Representative
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Thompson:

On behalf of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the more than 104,000 osteopathic physicians and osteopathic medical students we represent, thank you for introducing the “Medical Evaluation Parity for Servicemembers Act of 2014” (H.R. 4305).

Osteopathic medicine centers on providing patient-specific care that treats the whole person, including their physical and behavioral health. The “Medical Evaluation Parity for Servicemembers Act of 2014,” which seeks to provide baseline mental health assessments for Americans enlisting – or being commissioned as a military officer – in the United States Armed Forces, aligns well with our patient-centered focus. In fact, the AOA encourages osteopathic physicians, many of whom care for uniformed servicemembers or combat veterans, as well as their patients to be well informed with the advancements in mental health.

Better data lead to improved diagnoses, and more accurate diagnoses result in enhanced patient outcomes. The federal government has acknowledged the severity of post-combat conditions such as traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). But in order to truly understand the impact that these conditions have on individuals serving in the Armed Services, health professionals must have baseline behavioral screenings.

Thank you for championing this thoughtful legislation that, if enacted, would benefit our volunteer servicemembers as well as the physicians caring for these courageous Americans. With your continued leadership and the support of lawmakers in both chambers of Congress, we can advance this practical initiative.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Juhasz, DO
President