



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

September 2, 2020

The Honorable Mark Takano
Chair, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
B234 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 5516 (Levin) - Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Takano:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support H.R. 5516 which would enhance health and wellness, prevent suicide, and improve outreach to veterans by authorizing \$50 million annually for five years to expand and support County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) or similar local entities.

At the local level, CVSOs help veterans access a range of service-connected federal benefits, including VA health care, housing and transition assistance programs. Though CVSOs' primary focus is helping veterans navigate the federal benefits system, these offices are currently funded almost entirely by counties, which creates challenges for areas with high demand or counties that serve veterans in rural areas. The provisions outlined under H.R. 5516 would enable counties to better meet the needs of local veterans. States without CVSOs would also benefit under this legislation, as it would allow the VA Secretary to partner with state, local or tribal entities to improve service delivery and expand community-based outreach that will help veterans' access services to improve their health and wellness and prevent suicides.

H.R. 5516 would provide assistance to veterans to ensure that they are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs for which they may be eligible.

For the above reasons, the County support H.R. 5516. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please contact Josh Candelaria, Governmental and Legislative Director, at 909 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Hagman".

Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chair, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, House Committee on Veteran Affairs
The Honorable Mike Levin
San Bernardino County Federal Legislative Delegation

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