

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 6, 2015

The Honorable Johnny Isakson  
Chairman  
Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Miller  
Chairman  
House Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Corrine Brown  
Ranking Member  
House Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

As the committee prepares legislation to authorize Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Department of Veterans Affairs programs and projects, we ask that the committee include the attached legislative authority to allow the department to work with local governments and non-profits to provide additional housing and services for homeless and disadvantaged veterans at the West Los Angeles Campus.

The department recently reached a historic agreement to end the lawsuit brought against it by the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, and is in the process of creating a new Master Plan to ensure the campus fully serves the needs of all veterans in Southern California. To support these efforts, and to prevent future mismanagement, our attached legislation does the following:

First, it gives the department authority to enter into enhanced use leases for the West Los Angeles Campus for the sole purpose of providing supportive housing. This authority is coupled with a much-needed prohibition against selling, or in any other way disposing of, property for private development and private gain, which was contemplated in the past. We also included this prohibition in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008*, to protect portions of the campus from being sold to private entities.

There is a critical need for long-term supportive housing on the West Los Angeles Campus, and enhanced use leases would allow the department to work with community and state organizations toward the goal of ending veteran homelessness in Los Angeles. As you may be aware, Los Angeles is home to the largest population of homeless veterans in the country, which is simply unacceptable.

Second, our legislative text provides leasing authority for the West Los Angeles Campus in order to bring in community partners, such as the University of California – Los Angeles, to provide services that benefit veterans and help make the campus a veteran-



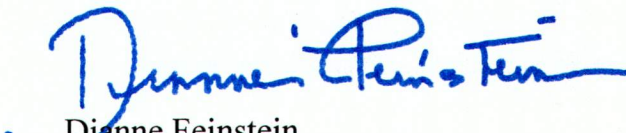
centric community setting. We support giving the department this authority, but believe it should be restricted to providing critical benefits for veterans, including homeless, disabled, aging and women veterans.

We remain deeply concerned about the department's historic track record, particularly at this campus, and have coupled these leasing authorities with the following strong oversight and accountability mechanisms:

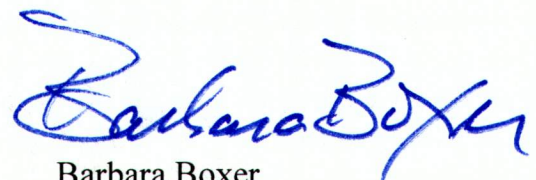
- All leases must be consistent with the new Master Plan under development, with community input, that will detail how the campus will be used to benefit all veterans;
- Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit reports on lease and land-use management of the West Los Angeles Campus will be required to be issued two years following enactment of this legislative text, five years following enactment, and then as necessary;
- The department will be prohibited from entering into new leases during any periods where it is found by the OIG to be out of compliance with federal policy or law pertaining to leases and land-use on the campus, until the department certifies it has corrected any non-compliance or mismanagement. This authority will also apply to renewing specific leases found to be out of compliance with federal law or policy; and
- The department will be required to notify the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees and the Congressional Delegation for the campus 45 days before entering into or renewing any lease, and submit an annual report evaluating all leases and land-sharing agreements on the campus.

We look forward to working with you to provide the department the authority, coupled with Congressional oversight, needed to improve how the West Los Angeles Campus serves veterans.

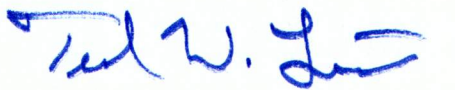
Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Ted W. Lieu  
United States Representative

DF/tc/l