



**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES,
IAMAW, AFL-CIO**



NFFE-IAM Opposes Expanded Privatization of the VA:

- Oppose the Caring for our Veterans Act (S. 2193)
- Oppose the VA Asset and Infrastructure Act (H.R. 4243)
- Oppose Expansion of the Choice Act Program

Position: These bills, as currently written, provide the VA Secretary with the authority to privatize and dismantle much of the of the VA health care system with little or no oversight from Congress, veterans, or other important stakeholders. Passing these bills in current form provides an unfair and unchecked advantage for private sectors providers to acquire operational authority and VA assets without proper transparency or evidence of competency of care.

Granting additional authority to privatize VA assets or transfer out additional VA funding further jeopardizes the current veteran-centric, comprehensive, integrated health care system. As proof of concept, the controversial Choice program—currently in its third year of operation offering privatized care to veterans—continues to exhibit chaos producing delays in veterans' care by outside networks, chronic disruptions in care coordination, and increased competition for overextended funding that further stresses VA centers.

Instead of continuing the loss of investment in VA privatization, NFFE supports: 1) mandates to fill the existing 49,000 vacancies at the VA, 2) more investment in current VA infrastructure, and 3) effective transparency and accountability of private sector providers.

Former VA Secretary, Dr. David Shulkin was fired for speaking the truth about the negative impacts of privatizing VA services and care. The White House—and presumably the next VA secretary—will place intense political pressure on Congress and VA leadership to pursue privatization against the best interests of veterans. The administration will continue to employ cunning techniques, including: the rapid expansion of the controversial Choice Act, closures of beds and facilities within the VA, a focus on VA oversight while suppressing scrutiny of unsafe private providers, attacking career VA caregivers while protecting political appointees, delaying the hiring of VA personnel, and manipulating data to hide the higher cost of expensive private sector health and medical providers.

To ensure proper care for veterans, and to stop irresponsible outsourcing measures, NFFE recommends the following:

- Accurate oversight on the cost, use and implementation of the Choice Act to include: the impact on the VA workforce, the work of third-party administrators, the impact on care received by veterans, and the cost and quality of private care versus care provided by the VA.
- Oppose all legislation that would extend or expand the Choice contract care program.
- Oppose all legislation that would replace the Choice program with a permanent community care program.
- Enact legislation to mandate that the VA hire enough front-line federal employees to erase the 49,000 unfilled in-house positions.
- Conduct oversight of VA's accounting practices and agreements related to claims made through the VA's private-care programs, including the Choice Program.
- Rescind the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017, widely criticized as failing, and investigate its negative effects on VA hiring goals for veterans, women and minorities.
- Oppose all legislation to reduce or limit use of official time at the VA.
- Cosponsor S 336/HR 980, the VA Employee Fairness Act of 2017, to restore equal collective bargaining rights to all VA clinicians.