



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

July 5, 2017

The Honorable John Garamendi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Garamendi:

Thank you for your June 12, 2017, co-signed letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Individual Unemployability benefits and the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Submission.

Our budget included this proposal as part of a balanced package of benefit refinements in consideration of the additional costs for continuing the Veterans Choice Program and ensuring every eligible Veteran may continue to seek care at VA or through a private provider. However, after careful consideration, I determined that I could not support a policy that has the potential to cause significant financial harm to Veterans.

Recognizing that finalizing the VA budget is a collaborative process, I look forward to continuing to work with Congress on how to best serve our Veterans and continue our most important programs.

Should you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Ms. Mandy Hartman, Congressional Relations Officer, at (202) 461-6416 or by email at Mandy.Hartman@va.gov. The cosigners of your letter will receive separate responses.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Shulkin, M.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

David J. Shulkin, M.D.