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August 31, 2023

The Honorable Steve Daines
Senator from Montana
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Daines,

On behalf of the over two million members of AMAC – Association of Mature American Citizens, including over 16,100 members residing in Montana, I write to offer our support for S. 1745, the Protecting Veteran Community Care Act. Your bill is intended to expand access to care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to include certain veterans seeking mental health or substance-use services.

According to the VA, in 2020 alone, 6,146 veterans died via suicide. In every single case, for one reason or another, our system did not help them. In many cases, our brave veterans face challenges including post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, and other mental health maladies connected to their military service.

The estimated suicide rate for veterans is nearly 17 suicides per day, each one a tragedy, each one a failure of the system. Your bill highlights the ineptitude of the VA to ensure that these American heroes receive help with mental health and substance abuse challenges. Indeed, it is prescriptive in nature and, in Section 6, deftly prevents the VA from manipulating regulations which would attenuate access to care for our veteran servicemembers.

Our veteran military members volunteered to support and defend the Constitution, and the best interests of our great nation, and we owe it to them to do better, and help them live with the consequences of supporting our country, and our collective future.

Thank you, Senator Daines, for advancing S. 1745. AMAC is pleased to offer our organization's full support for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Carlstrom".

Bob Carlstrom
President
AMAC Action