



June 26, 2007

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barack Obama
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Domenici and Obama:

The Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), an organization committed to ensuring that those injured in service to their country receive the proper care, applauds the introduction of S.38, *The Veteran's Mental Health Outreach and Access Act*--an important initiative to provide for the readjustment and mental health needs of our nation's veterans.

S.38 appropriately acknowledges the important role of the Department of Veterans (VA) Affairs in maintaining the full range of mental health services required for the care of our veterans. However, the legislation also recognizes that our military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are unique in their heavy reliance on the National Guard and Reserves and that these "citizen-soldiers" often hail from remote communities distant from the VA's specialized care. By authorizing the VA to obtain coordinated contract services from qualified community health centers in areas that are not adequately served by VA health care facilities or vet centers, S.38 provides the VA critically needed tools to address a growing population in need of mental health services.

In addition, as an organization with a robust peer support program, WWP is pleased that the legislation recognizes and encourages the successful, tested concept of having peers provide outreach services to those in need. We commend the bill's authors for recognizing this important element and, if invited, look forward to working with the VA to implement such a provision upon enactment.

Thank you for your support of America's veterans.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Chwat
Executive Vice President for Public Affairs

