



Dear Senator Woods and Representative Pettigrew,

The Veterans and Military Families Caucus supports your legislation **SB 52 - Emergency Rural & Frontier Hospital Funds**.

Expansion of rural health care resources in New Mexico is a critical issue for veterans and military families all over the state and especially in rural areas.

The 2023 Veterans Profile states that there were **139,347 veterans living in New Mexico as of 2021**. Veterans represented **8.6 percent of the civilian population 18 and older** in our state. Add to that the number of active duty military families in our state, National Guard families, and retired military and veteran family members that also may need access to health care.

Rural residents face serious challenges with access to health care. An estimated 15 to 20 percent of the US population live in rural areas. An average **8.7% of veterans live in New Mexico's rural areas**.

The VMFC Caucus has supported health care and behavioral health legislation in the past few years and will continue to do so. Please **share this letter of support with your colleagues** in committees as you advance the legislation.

If you have any questions about how this legislation benefits us or how we can support your efforts in this regard, please contact us.

Respectfully,



Dorothy Seaton

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