



Slotkin Reintroduces Bill to Expand Long Term Care for Veterans

Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act would allow veterans to live more independently and cut costs for the VA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S Rep. Elissa Slotkin (MI-08) today reintroduced the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act, which would help senior veterans live more independently and cut costs for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The legislation creates a three year pilot program for eligible veterans to receive assisted living care paid for by the VA. The bill is co-led by Democrats David Trone (MD-06) and Annie Kuster (NH-02), and Republican Bryan Steil (WI-01).

A September 2021 report to Congress by the VA concluded that the number of veterans eligible for nursing home care is expected to rise by approximately 535% over the next 20 years. However, many of these veterans do not require the comprehensive care provided by nursing homes, and would be better served by assisted living, which would allow them to live more independently. Currently, the VA is barred from covering room and board at assisted living facilities.

VA coverage of assisted living care would also significantly cut costs for the department, as nursing home fees average nearly \$121,000 per year, while assisted living facilities cost only a little more than \$51,000 per year.

“When we send our men and women in uniform into harm’s way, we make a solemn promise to take care of them when they return home, including in their later years,” said Slotkin. “Our bill is a bipartisan approach to make sure that our veterans have access to affordable, high quality care later in life. I’m pleased that this pilot program will lay the groundwork for veterans to live their lives independently and without undue financial stress.”

Slotkin served alongside the U.S. military as a CIA officer on three tours in Iraq. A member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in the 117th Congress, she's been a longtime advocate for Michigan's veterans, having introduced the [Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act](#), which was signed into law as part of the Honoring Our PACT Act in the summer of 2022. The package will provide

health insurance to an additional 3.5 million veterans suffering from the long-term effects of exposure to toxic burn pits.

“The brave men and women who serve our country in uniform sacrifice so much to keep us safe and protect our freedoms, it is essential we support them when they come home,” said Kuster, founder and co-chair of the 21st Century Long-Term Care Caucus. “I am proud to help reintroduce this bipartisan legislation to provide our service members choices and ensure they receive high-quality long-term care. I will always fight for our nation’s veterans.”

“With an increasing number of veterans in need of long-term health services, we have a responsibility to ensure access to and affordability of high-quality care for our service members,” said Trone. “This new assisted living pilot program will help veterans retain as much independence as possible while securing savings for the VA and its programs. As the proud son of a veteran, I’m committed to honoring America’s brave, and that starts with delivering the care they so rightly earned.”

The bill has been endorsed by a range of veteran service organizations and stakeholders nationwide, including Disabled American Veterans (DAV), National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Paralyzed Veterans of America’s Associate (PVA), American Association of Retired People (AARP), Michigan Assisted Living Association (MALA), Argentum, the American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA).

Over the next two decades, our nation will see a fivefold increase in the number of veterans requiring long-term care. This massive expected influx underscores the need for the VA to be prepared and equipped to ensure these veterans have the care they need to live as independently as possible. The Expanding Veterans’ Options for Long Term Care Act would expand long-term care options for aging, disabled veterans and allow more veterans to live their lives with respect and dignity. DAV applauds Rep. Slotkin for her leadership on this issue and for introducing this critical legislation,” said Joy Ilem, DAV National Legislative Director.

“MOAA is very appreciative of Representatives Slotkin, Steil, Trone, and Kuster for reintroducing the Expanding Veterans’ Options for Long Term Care Act from the last Congress,” said Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) President and CEO Lt Gen Brian Kelly. The pilot program is another tool for VA to provide assisted living services to eligible veterans so it can more aggressively address the rapidly growing population of aging and disabled veterans who are not able to live at home. MOAA looks forward to working with Congress to get this critical measure across the finish line this year,” said the Military Officers Association of America.

“As the nation’s and veteran’s populations age, Michigan’s senior living communities are prepared to accommodate the growth now and in the future. We have proven to be a safe, economical, and home-like setting for Michigan’s seniors for decades. Now, this legislation will open the door for more eligible veterans to have assisted living and other senior living care settings as potential homes. It is exciting and we look forward to gathering support for this legislation,” he said. **“We thank Rep. Slotkin for her leadership in introducing this bill in the House,” said Robert Stein, general counsel for Michigan Assisted Living Association (MALA).**

“Representatives Slotkin, Steil and Kuster have introduced legislation that will help America’s veterans. The Expanding Veterans’ Options for Long Term Care Act is a commonsense, bipartisan bill that will expand veterans’ access to assisted living services, many of whom would otherwise be forced into more expensive skilled nursing facilities, to continue living with respect and dignity in a community setting that better meets their needs. Argentum supports the legislation’s creation of a pilot program to help demonstrate the value of assisted living, so that more Americans can access this vital care. Our veteran population is aging rapidly and so are their long-term care needs. Veterans who have mandatory eligibility for nursing home care are expected to increase by approximately 535% over the next 20 years. Many veterans eligible for nursing home care may not need the high level of skilled nursing care in an institutional setting and may prefer a more appropriate level of care in a home-like, independent, and social care model such as assisted living,” **said Maggie Elehwany, Argentum Senior Vice President, Public Affairs.**

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