

Rep. Henry Cuellar Supports Veterans' Health and Wellbeing

Providing Mental Health and Homelessness Resources for Veterans

Rep. Cuellar Helped Establish Access to Federal Healthcare Services for Veterans Living in the South Texas Region.

- New Veterans Affairs (VA) Region Service Area was created in South Texas.
- In 2008, he helped engineer an innovative pilot partnership between the UT Health Science Center, local health providers and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Pulmonary, urology, cardiology, dermatology, ophthalmology, endocrinology, and PTSD services were offered locally, in South Texas, for first time.
- Additionally, physical and occupational therapy, prosthetics/orthotics, CAT scans, MRIs, dental and audiology services, and palliative radiation oncology are now provided for South Texas veterans close to home.

Rep. Cuellar Helped Establish Construction of New State-of-the-Art Veterans Health Clinics in South Texas (Laredo and McAllen Locations).

- In 2014, he facilitated partnerships between the Department of Veterans Affairs, Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, and Gateway Community Health Center Inc.
- Allowed for further expansion of health care services for veterans at the Laredo (VA) Outpatient Clinic and McAllen Vet Center.
- This means more services, expanded quality care and faster appointments with doctors and health professionals for veterans in South Texas.
- 95% of these veterans now receive healthcare services at home instead of traveling outside of their local communities.

Active / Passed Legislation

Rep. Cuellar Voted Yes on the *Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008* ("New G.I. Bill"). [PASSED INTO LAW]

- Increased educational benefits to all members of the military who have served for at least three months on active duty since September 11, 2001, including activated reservists and National Guardsmen and women.
- Funds 100% of a public four-year undergraduate education to a veteran who has served three years on active duty since September 11, 2001.
- Includes full education benefits up to the level of the most expensive in-state public university.
- Provides the ability for the veteran to transfer benefits to a spouse or children after serving (or agreeing to serve) ten years.

Rep. Cuellar Voted Yes on the *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014* ("Choice Act"). [PASSED INTO LAW]

- Allows veterans to seek medical care from private health-care providers.
- Veterans who live over 40 miles away from the nearest VA health clinic or who are unable to get an appointment in a reasonable time frame are able to receive "choice cards" allowing them to seek treatment from a non-VA facility.
- Provides \$10 billion to pay for the cost of providing medical care to veterans and \$5 billion for medical staff recruitment and graduate medical education benefits.

Rep. Cuellar Cosponsored the *Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017*. [PASSED INTO LAW]

- Expanded the New G.I. Bill's educational benefits for service members, veterans, and their families.

- Provided greater assistance for:
 - Beneficiaries who attend a for-profit school that closes in the middle of a semester.
 - Spouses and children of service members who died while on active duty.
 - Beneficiaries who take courses in science and technology.
 - Reserve and National Guard members who are called to active duty.

Rep. Cuellar was a Cosponsor of the *Veteran's Employment and Child Care Access Act of 2019*.

- Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide child care assistance to an eligible veteran for any period that the veteran: (1) receives VA training or vocational rehabilitation, and (2) is required to travel to and from a facility for the receipt of such training or rehabilitation.
- The VA is authorized to waive limitations related to maximum durations and instances of requested assistance.

Rep. Cuellar was a Cosponsor of the *Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act of 2019*.

- Authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assign a disability rating of total to a veteran by reason of unemployment.
- A veteran who has a service-connected disability will be covered if unable to secure or maintain substantially gainful employment and meets a lowered standard of service-connected disability.

Rep. Cuellar was an Original Cosponsor of the *Women Veterans Support Act of 2019*.

- Requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on suicide by women veterans that determines whether experiences with the medical facilities of the VA vary by gender.
- Requires actionable recommendations on preventing women veterans from attempting or committing suicide to be reported.

Rep Cuellar was a Cosponsor of the *VA Emergency Transportation Act of 2019*.

- Reimburses veterans for the cost of emergency medical transportation to Federal facilities.
- Clarifies that these medical transfers are reimbursable and fixes a large, costly hole in veteran medical coverages.

Rep Cuellar is a Cosponsor of the *Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2021*

- Amends Title 38, United States Code, to concede exposure to airborne hazards and toxins from burn pits under certain circumstances and for other purposes.

Rep Cuellar is a Cosponsor of the *PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act of 2021*

- Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on dog training therapy, and to amend Title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide service dogs to veterans and mental illnesses who do not have mobility impairments

Rep Cuellar is a Cosponsor of the *Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks Act of 2021*

- Directs the Secretary of Interior to make free National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes available to members of Armed Forces

Rep. Cuellar is a Cosponsor of the *Repatriate Our Patriots Act of 2021*

- Protects certain veterans* of the Armed Forces from removal from the U.S. and provide veterans with an expedited procedures for naturalization. *1) honorably discharged or released 2) not convicted of various crimes, including voluntary manslaughter, murder, rape, or terrorism and 3) not a child abuser or pedophile.
- DHS is ordered to cancel any pending removal proceedings or orders against such veterans.

Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations Provisions

Rep. Cuellar secured language directing assistance to Homeless Veterans near the U.S.-Mexico Border.

- Directs the VA to work with HUD to develop strategies and recommendations for addressing Veteran homelessness near the US – Mexico border.
- Requires that these undercounted Veterans be accounted for when awarding HUD-VASH vouchers.

Rep. Cuellar secured language to provide Local Law Enforcement Departments with Veterans Mental Health Response Liaisons.

- Tasks the VA with performing educational outreach to local law enforcement communities. to be
- Promotes active educational awareness on the unique issues facing Veterans, especially those returning from combat operations.

Rep Cuellar helped secure \$2,154,450,000 for VA Homeless Assistance Programs.

- Increase of \$167,568,000 above FY21 funding.

Rep. Cuellar helped secure over \$13,000,000,000 in funding for Veteran Mental Health Programs.

- Includes \$2,340,341,000 for suicide prevention and treatment programs.
- Includes \$598,997,000 for suicide prevention outreach, which is \$286,362,00 above FY21 funding.
- Includes recommendation to conduct more aggressive outreach to at-risk, non-citizen Veterans and promotes confidential internet-based substance abuse education.

Rep. Cuellar helped secure \$307,455,000 for the Office of Rural Health (ORH) to improve access and quality of care to Veterans in Rural Areas.

- Increase of \$7,455,000 above FY21 funding to improve the access of more than 3,000,000 enrolled Veterans residing in rural and highly rural areas.
- Includes language requiring the VA's telehealth plan to include actions that will be taken to make telehealth more accessible to patients in highly rural areas.

Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Provisions

Rep. Cuellar secured language directing assistance to Homeless Veterans near the U.S.-Mexico Border.

- Directs the VA to work with HUD to develop strategies and recommendations for addressing Veteran homelessness near the US – Mexico border.
- Requires that these undercounted Veterans be accounted for when awarding HUD-VASH vouchers.

Rep. Cuellar secured language to provide Local Law Enforcement Departments with Veterans Mental Health Response Liaisons.

- Tasks the VA with performing educational outreach to local law enforcement communities. to be
- Promotes active educational awareness on the unique issues facing Veterans, especially those returning from combat operations.

Rep Cuellar helped secure \$1,908,769,000 for VA Homeless Assistance Programs.

Rep. Cuellar helped secure over \$10,000,000,000 in funding for Veteran Mental Health Programs.

- Includes \$1,900,000,000 for suicide prevention and treatment programs.
- Includes \$312,635,000 for suicide prevention outreach.
- Includes recommendation to conduct more aggressive outreach to at-risk, non-citizen Veterans and promotes confidential internet-based substance abuse education.

Rep. Cuellar helped secure \$300,000,000 for the Office of Rural Health (ORH) to improve access and quality of care to Veterans in Rural Areas.

- Includes an additional \$40,000,000 to increase telehealth capacity in rural and highly rural areas.
- Includes language requiring the VA's telehealth plan to include actions that will be taken to make telehealth more accessible to patients in highly rural areas.

Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations Provisions

Rep. Cuellar secured language directing assistance to Homeless Veterans near the U.S.-Mexico Border.

- Directs the VA to work with HUD to develop strategies and recommendations for addressing Veteran homelessness near the US – Mexico border.
- Requires that these undercounted Veterans be accounted for when awarding HUD-VASH vouchers.

Rep. Cuellar secured language to provide Local Law Enforcement Departments with Veterans Mental Health Response Liaisons.

- Tasks the VA with performing educational outreach to local law enforcement communities. to be
- Promotes active educational awareness on the unique issues facing Veterans, especially those returning from combat operations.

Rep Cuellar helped secure \$1,858,534,000 for VA Homeless Assistance Programs.

- Includes \$380,000,000 for the Supportive Services to Veteran Families program.

Rep. Cuellar helped secure over \$9,450,000,000 in funding for Veteran Mental Health Programs.

- Includes \$1,526,059,000 for suicide prevention and treatment programs.
- Includes \$221,000,000 for suicide prevention outreach.
- Includes recommendation to conduct more aggressive outreach to at-risk, non-citizen Veterans and promotes confidential internet-based substance abuse education.

Rep. Cuellar helped secure \$270,000,000 for the Office of Rural Health (ORH) to improve access and quality of care to Veterans in Rural Areas.

- Includes an additional \$30,000,000 to increase telehealth capacity in rural and highly rural areas.
- Includes language requiring the VA's telehealth plan to include actions that will be taken to make telehealth more accessible to patients in highly rural areas.