

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF STATE OFFICES OF RURAL HEALTH



• 44648 Mound Road, #114 • Sterling Heights, MI 48314-1322 •
• Phone: 586-739-9940 • Fax: 586-739-9941 • Email: nosorhpd@comcast.net •

July 31, 2008

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
331 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: S. 2993/ H.R. 6011

Dear Senator Klobuchar and Congresswomen Herseth Sandlin:

The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health, which represents the country's fifty State Offices of Rural Health as they work to improve health and health care in rural America, wholeheartedly supports the Veterans to Paramedics Transition Act, your legislation to support training of returning veterans as emergency medical services personnel. The legislation specifically takes into account the previous medical coursework and training veterans received when they were active members of the armed forces.

A significant number of returning combat veterans, who are disproportionately from rural America, are returning from service with experience and training as military medics, but there is no clear path to convert their health care skills into health careers. At the same time, there is a chronic shortage of rural EMTs and paramedics. The career paths of these veterans could be improved and a workforce need simultaneously met by supporting tailored training to credit veterans' medic experiences and provide completion courses leading to EMT or paramedic certification. The bill would allow grants to training institutions providing completion coursework to experienced veterans to enable them to meet state EMS certifications requirements.

Congratulations on proposing such a creative solution to the intersecting issues of emergency medical services workforce shortages, improving rural health, and integrating our returning veterans. If the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health can be of any assistance as the legislation moves forward, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Karen Madden, President