

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Press Statement Regarding the Need for Legislation to Implement Updated Partnership Agreements for West Los Angeles VA

VA Secretary Bob McDonald, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Congressman Ted Lieu released the following statements regarding the need for legislation to legally implement updated collaborations announced today by VA with Brentwood School and the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks.

An agreement with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), was announced in January of this year. Consistent with the Framework Draft Master Plan, the additional agreements announced today secure more robust in-kind services, increased financial compensation, and additional opportunities aimed at benefitting Veterans and their families. The services are targeted toward the most vulnerable Veteran populations including those who are chronically homeless, female, disabled, or aging. These partnerships support the goal of making the West LA VA campus a modern-day version of what the land was initially deeded to be – a place for Veterans to call “home.”

The details of the agreements can be found in the accompanying Fact Sheet and on the following website: <http://www.losangeles.va.gov>.

“To solve Veteran homelessness nationwide, we need to solve it in Los Angeles,” stated Secretary McDonald. “We have made tremendous progress in L.A. Just last year, we saw Veteran homelessness decrease by more than 30%, but there is still more work to do. Today is another important step towards our goal.” McDonald adds, “The Framework Draft Master Plan and the services that accompany it, reflect the immediate need to build permanent and supportive housing on VA’s West LA Campus for thousands of the most vulnerable Veterans. However, this plan cannot be fully implemented until Congress passes the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans

Leasing Act, introduced by Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Congressman Lieu. This legislation would authorize the development of permanent supportive housing and services for homeless Veterans and their families. I hope the public will encourage their legislators to move quickly and pass this bill, so we can complete the master planning process and provide these additional facilities and services.”

Senator Feinstein remarked: “The VA has cleared a major hurdle in finalizing the new Master Plan for the West LA Campus. The agreements with UCLA, the Brentwood School and City of Los Angeles will expand services for veterans including education, addiction treatment, mental health care, recreational opportunities, job training and legal assistance.” Feinstein also noted that “The VA can’t move forward with its plans to transform the campus unless Congress passes legislation to restore its authority to enter into lease agreements with nonprofit organizations, which I have offered in the Senate. Los Angeles has the highest number of Veterans and homeless Veterans in the country and we need to get this bill done.”

Congressman Ted Lieu commented: “I am pleased the Department has reached agreements with key partners at the West LA VA. Government alone cannot maintain a robust, Veteran-centric facility without additional supportive services and community participation. The conclusion of these agreements makes it all the more important that Congress immediately takes up the Los Angeles Homeless Veterans Leasing Act. This bill – along with these agreements and the Framework Draft Master Plan-will trigger the development of much needed permanent supportive housing on the campus.”

For more information please visit <http://www.losangeles.va.gov>.

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