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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 07, 2016

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## Commission on Care's Final Report 'Horrendous, Anti-Veteran' Says VA Union

Categories: VA

***AFGE President says Commission's recommendations would dismantle the nation's largest and best health care system, hurting veterans and exploding costs***



**WASHINGTON** – In response to the release of the Commission on Care's final report on reforming the VA this week, American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) National President J. David Cox, Sr. today issued the following statement:

“The American Federation of Government Employees condemns in the strongest possible terms, the horrendous, anti-veteran proposal put forward by the Commission on Care. These recommendations would essentially destroy the veterans' health care system, leaving millions of veterans without the integrated care they rely on. Veterans would suffer from a drastically reduced quality of care, higher costs, less access, and the system as a whole would become unaccountable to

veterans and taxpayers. Instead it would place veterans' care in the hands of executives with corporate backgrounds, leaving veterans without a voice.

If the Commission's mission, as they state in their report, was to “provide eligible veterans prompt access to quality health care,” they have achieved the opposite. The only result of these recommendations would be to fragment the most integrated health care approach in the nation, lower quality across the board by sending veterans to for-profit private providers, line the pockets of private hospital

corporations, and hand over control of veterans' healthcare to an out-of-touch, corporate-style board.

The most egregious recommendation in the report would dismantle veteran-centric care through the vast expansion of costly, for-profit provider care. The VA provides veterans the best health care in the country – something acknowledged even by this biased Commission in their final report – yet they want to push veterans out the door to lower quality, for-profit providers who will inevitably offer inferior care. As it stands now, only 13 percent of mental health providers in the private sector are properly prepared to treat our veterans. Veterans will not be helped by having inferior care at higher costs. It is far better for veterans and taxpayers to invest in the only system tailored to veterans that is already proven to be better and has already made vast improvements.

Today veterans can walk into any VA hospital and receive seamless access to the integrated primary medical, behavioral, and specialty care provided by a system that specializes in their care. This care also includes support systems offered at the VA through financial, educational, housing, and employment support. Destroying this system in favor of fragmented, for-profit private providers creates dangerous gaps in treatment and missed opportunities to heal veterans suffering from many complex, interrelated conditions and problems.

Veterans have overwhelmingly said they want to get their healthcare at the VA. It is the only system equipped to offer the veteran-centric healing they earned through their sacrifice. That's why large and well-respected veterans service organizations like the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans oppose further privatization (<https://www.dav.org/learn-more/news/2016/joint-vso-letter-to-the-commission-on-care/>) of the system. We urge President Obama to reject the recommendations in this horrendously anti-veteran document.”

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The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union, representing 670,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.

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