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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 28, 2005

BACK OUR VETERANS HEALTH!

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VETERANS' HEALTH

website: www.house.gov/filner

Dear Colleague:

I invite you to co-sponsor my bill, H.R. 917, the Better Access to Chiropractors to Keep Our Veterans Healthy Act – B A C K Our Veterans Health Act.

Since the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) health system, the nation's doctors of chiropractic have been kept outside and all but prevented from providing proven, cost-effective and much-needed care to veterans. H.R. 917 is designed to provide veterans with the care that many of them want and need. This legislation will give them direct access to a doctor of chiropractic, if that is their choice, in the VA health care system.

In recent years, Congress has enacted three separate statutes seeking to provide veterans with chiropractic care – Public Law 106-117, Public Law 107-135, and Public Law 108-170. The last of these statutes gives explicit authority to the VA to hire doctors of chiropractic as full-time employees. I am proud to have worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to help advance these initiatives.

I understand that, last year, former VA Secretary Anthony Principi released some new policy directives regarding chiropractic care, and I am hopeful that we are on our way to seeing the true and full integration of chiropractic care into the VA. But if the past is any guide to the future, we must remain concerned until we see new policies in place and working well in all VA treatment facilities. If the previous legislation (that are now laws) had actually been implemented, H.R. 917 would not be necessary, because referrals to doctors of chiropractic would be taking place with the encouragement and support of the

leadership in the VA. But this has not been the case in the past. As insurance, the enactment of H.R. 917 will guarantee the right of a veteran to obtain this important service without the costs and stumbling blocks of going through potentially-hostile gatekeepers.

Please co-sponsor the BACK Our Veterans Health Act with a call or e-mail to Sharon Schultze, my Senior Legislative Assistant, at x58045 or sharon.schultze@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob". The letters are stylized and cursive.

BOB FILNER
Member of Congress