

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2017

Secretary David J. Shulkin
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin,

On October 1, 2017, a shooter opened fire on the Route 91 Harvest outdoor music festival in Las Vegas, Nevada. During this horrific event, 58 innocent victims were murdered and 489 individuals sustained injuries. Among the victims and heroes, there were veterans. We write to you today to ask that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ensures that any veteran impacted by this tragedy has access to the health care, benefits, and assistance your agency can provide in its role to promote the well-being of those who served.

First and foremost, we applaud the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, as well as the Las Vegas and Henderson Vet Centers, for stepping up during this time of crisis to provide support to the entire Las Vegas community. They deployed a team to the family reunification center to assist those searching for family, as well as provided on-site counseling services at Sunrise Hospital and University Medical Center. The Vet Center staff, who have combat service and deployment experience, were able to provide counseling to those who needed it, including victims and their families and first responders who often suffer from post-traumatic stress after traumatic incidents.

It is clear that the VA has all the right tools and resources to be a valuable asset as the Las Vegas community and victims from across our country begin the process of recovery. For many of the victims injured, the road to recovery is long, and some of those individuals are veterans. That is why we ask that you ensure any veteran impacted by this tragedy receives the care and benefits they need as they recover emotionally and physically in the months to come. We encourage you to work with local leaders on the ground, including the local VA hospital and vet centers, to identify any veterans who were injured or involved in this incident and conduct outreach so they understand how the VA can be of assistance. This tragedy may impact many parts of a veteran's life, including employment, health care, and post-traumatic stress, and the VA has existing services to address all these areas of need.

We appreciate your attention to this critical issue for our veteran community and the support the VA has already provided the Las Vegas community in the aftermath of this tragedy.

Sincerely,



Dean Heller
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator