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Blunt's Bipartisan Veteran PEER Act Signed Into Law

JUNE 14TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Blunt's Bipartisan Veteran PEER Act Signed Into Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.) today announced that his bipartisan Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration (Veteran PEER) Act was signed into law as part of the VA Mission Act, which passed the Senate last month with overwhelming support. The Veteran PEER Act expands veterans' access to peer counseling specialists to better combat the risks of suicide and treat associated mental health conditions.

"Making sure veterans have access to timely, quality mental and behavioral health treatment is a top priority of mine," said Blunt. "Given their shared experience, peer specialists are uniquely qualified to help veterans overcome the challenges they face when seeking mental health treatment, navigating the VA health system, and more. I'm glad to see this bill become law and I'll continue working to improve mental health treatment for our nation's veterans."

Blunt introduced the bill with Senator Richard Blumenthal (Conn.) in September 2017. Blunt discussed the legislation on the Senate floor last month.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently employs peer specialists to assist veterans in treatment for mental health and substance abuse disorders. The VA was instructed by a 2012 Executive Order to hire and train 800 peer counselors by December 31, 2013, to treat the estimated 1.5 million veterans requiring mental health services.

The Veteran PEER Act expands veterans' access to peer specialist services by specifically targeting shortcomings in the current program, including peer specialists' restricted participation in primary care services; persistent stigma attached to seeking treatment for mental health disorders; and under-promoted proven successes of the peer specialist program in veteran reintegration.

The Veteran PEER Act:

Authorizes the VA to establish peer specialists in Patient Aligned Care Teams within VA medical centers to promote the use and integration of mental health and substance use treatment services in the primary care setting.

Implements the program in 30 locations across the nation over two years, with required consideration of rural and underserved areas when selecting program locations.

Requires regular reports to Congress with information on the benefits to veterans and their families derived from use of peer specialists.

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Leave When the Work's Done

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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Leave When the Work's Done

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Congressman Smith Capitol Report Leave When the Work's Done June 8, 2018

It's about time the United States Senate calls the bluff of the obstructionist liberals in their ranks and gets serious about finishing the people's work. Just this week they took a step in the right direction by canceling Senators' traditional August break – doubling down on their efforts to confirm the President's nominees and get through the backlog of limited government, pro-growth pieces of legislation the U.S. House has passed

over the last 18 months which have been stymied in the Senate. The House of Representatives has been more productive working with President Trump than with any of the last four administrations, but the Senate is setting records of its own for how long it takes to finish their work and the number of delay tactics being used to slow down President Trump's agenda.

Obstructionists use many road blocks, one of the most common methods Senators have used this Congress is forcing 'cloture' votes. This arcane filibuster procedure requires presidential nominees to clear a higher vote threshold to become confirmed. In the first two years of President Obama's first term, there were 12 cloture votes on his executive and judicial nominees. So far, liberal Senators have forced more than 100 cloture votes on President Trump's nominees. Because of this, 183 of the president's nominees are still awaiting confirmation and key posts across the government remain unfilled more than 500 days into President Trump's first term. It's clear the obstructionists are more concerned with chewing up the clock instead of fulfilling their constitutional duty to confirm nominees, so let's give them more clock.

The United States Senate has become known as "the place where good bills go to die." Bills designed to help Missouri families and small businesses have been bogged down in the swamp of arcane procedures, delay tactics, and outright refusal to consider legislation from the people's House. In fact, 503 bills have been passed by the Republican House and are supported by President Trump, only to be ignored in the United States Senate.

Important work is sitting unfinished. Bills like the REINS Act, which will allow Congressional approval on any bureaucracy action that will cost the economy \$100 million more, remain passed by the House, supported by the president, but untouched by the U.S. Senate. My bill, the Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome (SCRUB) Act to get rid of outdated regulations, passed the House through regular order and the Senate hasn't done anything with it in 17 months. Important pro-life bills passed in the House of Representatives like the Born-Alive Survivors Protection Act, designed to end the disgusting, immoral practice of killing live infants who were able to survive abortion attempts haven't even been debated or given a committee hearing in the U.S. Senate. And the Senate refuses to vote on measures like national concealed carry reciprocity, despite more than 200 House members cosponsoring the bill and a majority voting to send it to the Senate last year.

I hope the legislative bottleneck in the Senate will ease up after the Senators stay in town for August, because the House is getting the people's work done. Working with

President Trump, the House has passed more bills out of committee and out of the House than with any of the past four presidents at the beginning of their terms. Meanwhile the only records the Senate is breaking is the record of bills going there to die and record amount of time it takes to have vital nominees confirmed.

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Important Information for Van Buren and Carter County Citizens Regarding May 2017 Flood

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Important Information for Van Buren and Carter County Citizens Regarding May 2017 Flood

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VAN BUREN AND CARTER COUNTY
CITIZENS REGARDING THE FLOOD OF MAY 2017.**

On Thursday, June 7th, a meeting was held in Jefferson City between State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Carter County officials: Presiding Commissioner Donald Black, Sheriff Rick Stephens and County Clerk Leona Stephens. Also in attendance and joining in on the discussion were Rep. Steve Cookson, Mr. Bennie Cook representing Congressman Jason Smith's office and me.

The focus of the meeting was to get clarity on the recovery and rebuilding of the Carter County Justice Center, The Sheriff's office and the courthouse. It has been clear that the Justice Center and the Sheriff's office need to be replaced and relocated. Many citizens have indicated their desire to keep the courthouse at its original location.

Carter County officials have been under the impression, through written and verbal communications with FEMA, that the process to approve the rebuilding of the Justice Center and Sheriff's office and to start the repair of the courthouse would be forthcoming soon.

It became apparent at this meeting, there is still a lot of work to be done by our county officials in providing even more information and studies to FEMA (in all fairness to the FEMA staff, federal law has to be followed). This meeting became very contentious when discussing the courthouse restoration, but the Carter County officials did a wonderful job in negotiating.

At NO fault of the Carter County officials, this is, and has been, a very complex undertaking with government red tape. Complying with and following FEMA instructions has been very difficult and sometimes the communications were not clear, which has resulted in misinformation received from FEMA.

Bottom Line: The work of Commissioner Donald Black, Sheriff Rick Stephens, Clerk Leona Stephens and many other Carter County citizens and officials has been amazing through this whole tragedy.

This work is NOT over. To keep the courthouse at its present location will take everybody pulling together.

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Smith Proposal to Protect Homes & Property near Mississippi River Passes U.S. House

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Smith Proposal to Protect Homes & Property near Mississippi River Passes U.S. House

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Washington, D.C. - The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) of 2018 on Wednesday with Congressman Jason Smith's (MO-08) amendment included to protect Missouri homes and farmland residing along the Mississippi River.

"The 2011 Army Corps activation of the Birds Point Levee was one the darkest days for the families and farmers residing along the river. What's worse, it took the Corps eighteen months to return the levees back to their original design. That is absolutely unacceptable," said Congressman Smith. "The people of Southeast Missouri are

resilient and did their best to pick up the pieces and return to their lives, but it must never happen again. My amendment makes clear the Army Corps cannot activate any floodway unless they are prepared to restore it quickly. Simply put, a levee should never even be a candidate for activation unless there is quick and clear plan to restore it. That wasn't the case back then, but it will be now."

In 2011 the Mississippi River experienced historic flooding and the Army Corps of Engineers detonated the Birds Point levee in Southeast Missouri. 130,000 acres of land in Southeast Missouri were flooded, destroying homes, farmland, and communities.

Wednesday the U.S. House of Representatives passed the water resources bill with Congressman Smith's amendment included, requiring the prompt restoration and rebuilding for any levee damaged by the Army Corps of Engineers. It was the latest example of Congressman Smith intervening with the Army Corps to better protect Missourians from flooding.

In December of 2015 constant rainfall caused the Mississippi River waters to quickly rise. Congressman Smith organized public meetings with the Army Corps so southeast Missourians could address their concerns directly to the Corps and ensure the levee wouldn't be activated again.

In October last year, Congressman Smith convinced the St. Louis Corps of Engineers to reverse their previous decision and fund a study on the cause of frequent flooding along Joachin Creek in De Soto.

Recently in March, Congressman Smith discussed the importance of advancing transportation on the Mississippi River with other federal elected officials and river industry leaders, urging modernizing and maintaining the system to protect residents.

"Many of these systems have fallen into disrepair and neglect, but fortunately President Trump understands how important it is to rebuild the nation's infrastructure to support a growing economy," said Congressman Smith.

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Swearing in of New MO Governor Mike Parson

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Swearing in of New MO Governor Mike Parson

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Blunt Statement on the Swearing-In of Missouri Governor Mike Parson

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.) released the following statement today after Mike Parson was sworn in as governor of Missouri:

“Mike Parson became Sheriff of Polk County the same week I became the President of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar in 1993. We have been good friends since then. As a county official, an effective state legislator, and Lieutenant Governor, he understands our state in ways that few people do. He will be a great governor and I

look forward to helping him in any way I can."

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