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VeteransAgainstAlzheimer's Applauds Congress for Introducing Bill Promising to Help Veterans with Alzheimer's

The Medical Improvement of Neurodegenerative Disease (MIND) Act of 2018 Directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to Establish New Alzheimer's Disease Research, Education, and Clinical Centers

March 20, 2018 – On March 7, U.S. Representative Mike Coffman (R-CO), along with his colleagues Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX) and Representative Cathy McMorris-Rodgers (R-WA) introduced H.R. 5191, the [Medical Improvement of Neurodegenerative Diseases \(MIND\) Act of 2018](#). UsAgainstAlzheimer's welcomes this critical legislation and is committed to doing more for military families touched by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

"Alzheimer's disease is at the heart of the MIND Act," said George Vradenburg, co-founder and chairman of UsAgainstAlzheimer's. "This bill represents a much-needed acknowledgement among policymakers of the connection between brain health and brain injury and the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in our veteran population. Also, it calls for further investigation into why Down syndrome increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease and demonstrates a commitment in Congress to helping us understand the risk factors of Alzheimer's."

The MIND Act directs the Department of Veterans' Affairs to develop research, education, and clinical centers focused on Alzheimer's disease and to explore the correlation between Alzheimer's disease and Down syndrome. [VeteransAgainstAlzheimer's \(VA2\), a network of UsAgainstAlzheimer's](#), fully supports the MIND Act and applauds Rep. Coffman for his leadership on the critical issue of the connection between veterans' service and the development of Alzheimer's disease. VA2 also congratulates the [Global Down Syndrome Foundation and their CEO, Michelle Whitten](#), for their advocacy and leadership efforts, which are driving research programs centered on understanding why those with an extra chromosome 21 are at such a heightened risk for Alzheimer's disease.

In the short-term, the MIND Act will raise awareness about the unique risk for Alzheimer's disease that veterans face and how their service has been shown to increase that risk. In the long-term, the MIND Act could prove transformative for identifying ways to prevent and cure Alzheimer's disease in veterans, as well as in the broader community.

In addition to the development of new centers aimed at helping veterans affected by Alzheimer's disease, VeteransAgainstAlzheimer's is also pleased to see that the Mind Act contains provisions that will increase the chances that the newly established centers are successful in their missions to understand, educate, and treat Alzheimer's disease.

"These features of the MIND Act demonstrate a commitment to scientific rigor and to ensuring that progress made in our understanding of Alzheimer's disease is efficiently applied to the way we care for veterans who are affected by the disease," said Shawn Taylor, Founder and President of

VA2. "One of the missions of VeteransAgainstAlzheimer's is to ensure that perceptions and preferences of veterans with Alzheimer's are incorporated into relevant solutions. We are also excited to see that the MIND Act calls specifically for these voices to be heard in advisory committees and that it is forward thinking in terms of ensuring that insights are efficiently translated into practical solutions for veterans."

When veterans experience traumatic brain injuries, their chance of developing Alzheimer's disease increases by 60%. The risk for those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder is doubled. For veterans, the Act could mean advancing our understanding of how to reduce veterans' vulnerability to Alzheimer's disease. The VA estimates that 750,000 veterans suffer from Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. According to Rep. Coffman, the MIND Act would lead to research that "will help the VA better understand how Alzheimer's disease progresses, why certain people are more susceptible to the disease, and perhaps lead to breakthrough treatments for Alzheimer's.

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