



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

August 3, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities wrote to you in May to express our support for S. 1034, the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) Children's Care Protection Act. We are reaching out to you today to ask that you include that measure in the legislative package to be considered by your committee this month.

As our previous letter explained, the children of veterans with disabilities who rely on the CHAMPVA for access to health care are not allowed to remain on their parents' insurance until the age of 26, as is provided under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). At a time when health care coverage is essential for so many Americans confronted by COVID-19, we must do everything we can to ensure people are not losing their access to health care. Our organizations are deeply concerned about the health security of this segment of the population. We believe these children of veterans are particularly vulnerable and need this fundamental health insurance program now as a means of securing health care and protecting their well-being. It is also a simple matter of equity that these young people should not be excluded from the health coverage protections afforded to all other young adults until age 26 under current law. Should an amendment be offered to include the CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act in an omnibus veterans' legislative package, we urgently ask for your support of that request.

As you know, the ACA required private-sector health plans to allow young people to stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26, but this coverage was not extended to military or veteran health coverage. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2011 increased dependent coverage under TRICARE up to age 26 to make it consistent with the ACA. As a result, the only dependents that are not covered under a parent's health insurance policy up to age 26 are those of 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans covered under CHAMPVA. Currently, a child of a veteran loses eligibility for CHAMPVA at the age of 23 if they are a student or at the age of 18 otherwise. The CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act would fix this loophole for the VA's CHAMPVA program.

During this unprecedented pandemic, young dependents of veterans with disabilities face losing CHAMPVA coverage through no fault of their own. Many of these young people are unable to finish college or may be precluded from enrolling or attending college during the coming weeks and months because of financial or other hardships caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Others have lost their jobs as a result of the economic disruption caused by the pandemic. Given the extreme magnitude of this crisis, it is critical that the CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act finally pass.

We appreciate your attention to this pressing issue and look forward to seeing this inequitable situation addressed.

Sincerely,

The Arc of the United States
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Public Representation
Center for Reproductive Rights
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Coalition for Disability Health Equity
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Epilepsy Foundation
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy and Community Empowerment
National Council on Independent Living
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Paralyzed Veterans of America
RespectAbility
U.S. International Council on Disabilities

Cc: The Honorable Jon Tester, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs
The Honorable Sherrod Brown, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs