

## United States Senate

October 6, 2015

Thank you for allowing me to share a few words. I'm sorry I couldn't be with you today. Physician Assistants are critical to the health and safety of all Americans.

In many rural states and underserved areas – like my home state of Montana - folks rely on Physician Assistants for a whole range of services, from routine check-ups, to urgent care, and health emergencies.

But across the country today there is an estimated shortage of 30,000 Physician Assistants. This shortage puts an incredible strain on rural health care providers and limits access to quality care that folks so desperately need.

That is why this week I introduced the *Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act (S.2134)*.

My bipartisan bill will provide veterans who served as medics or corpsmen in the armed forces with the opportunity to attain the education and training needed to become a Physician Assistant. These are folks with medical backgrounds who are eager to advance their careers and help fellow veterans.

Once they complete their training and become certified Physician Assistants, participants in the program will be required to work and fill vacancies at the VA for at least three years before entering the private sector, if they so choose.

Not only does this bill create a career pathway for our veterans after they separate from the service, but it addresses the shortage of health care professionals within both the VA and medical centers across the United States.

I want to thank you for your help drafting this bill; your support is critical to getting it across the finish line. So please reach out to your Senators and Representatives and let them know that passing this bipartisan bill is essential to meeting the needs of the patients you see each and every day.

Thanks again for your hard work.

Keep in touch.

