

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 8, 2008

The Honorable James Peake, M.D.
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Peake:

We write to request your support for the approval of funding for a new State Veterans Home at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Walla Walla VA Medical Center in Fiscal Year 2009.

As you know, the Walla Walla VA nursing home has been caring for veterans in southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon and northern Idaho for 80 years. However, two weeks ago the Department of Veterans Affairs closed the facility and relocated all remaining patients after an independent audit determined that the facility posed an immediate threat to life and did not meet professional standards.

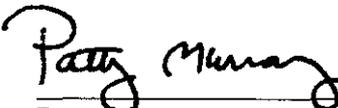
The findings of the independent auditor and the VA's subsequent decision to close the Walla Walla VA nursing home underscore the urgent need to build a new, state-of-the-art nursing home facility at the Walla Walla VA Medical Center.

Fortunately, the Walla Walla VA Medical Center and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs have been working together to meet the long term care needs of veterans in this region by building a State Veterans Home on the Walla Walla VA Medical Center grounds. In fact, on July 30, 2008, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Director John Lee sent a letter to you expressing the State of Washington's intent to move forward with the funding and construction of a State Veterans Home.

Given Washington state's commitment to fund its portion of the State Veterans Home, and in light of the VA's decision to close the Walla Walla VA nursing home, we urge you to provide federal funding for construction of the Walla Walla State Veterans Home in Fiscal Year 2009.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. We look forward to working with you on this and others matters of concern to our Nation's veterans.

Sincerely,



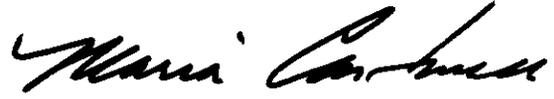
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Larry Craig
United States Senator



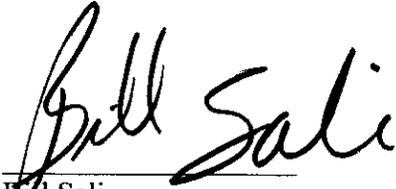
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



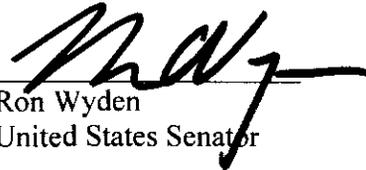
Bill Sali
Member of Congress



Gordon Smith
United States Senator



Greg Walden
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator