

VFW Against Candidate's Call to Eliminate the VA

'It provides an irreplaceable service to the nation's wounded, ill and injured veterans'

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is 100 percent against suggestions made by Dr. Ben Carson to eliminate the Department of Veterans Affairs by moving it under the Department of Defense. The presidential candidate's remark was made while appearing on the nationally syndicated Dave Ramsey radio program yesterday.

While discussing how to reduce the size of government, Carson questioned why there is a VA, that what it does "should be folded in under the Department of Defense," that veterans should be given health savings accounts and sent out into the economy, and that VA facilities should be used just for specialized care for traumatic brain injury, limb replacements and research.

"I could not disagree with Dr. Carson more," said John A. Biedrzycki Jr., the national commander of the 1.7 million-member VFW and its Auxiliaries.

"The Defense Department's focus in the personnel realm is on recruiting and retention. Taking care of veterans is a mission they gladly cede to the VA, which provides a continuum and continuity of care that is unmatched anywhere," he explained. "To suggest that disabled veterans could be sent out into the economy with a health savings account card overlooks the fact that civilian health care has waiting lists of their own, that private practices often limit the number of government plan patients they accept due to low reimbursement rates, and presupposes that civilian doctors have the same skillsets as VA doctors, who see veterans of every age and malady every day. And to suggest that VA medical facilities should only be used for traumatic brain injuries, limb replacements and research ignores the entire mission and purpose of the VA," he said.

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“The VFW is 100 percent against any effort to privatize or diminish the effectiveness of the VA,” said Biedrzycki. “It provides an irreplaceable service to the nation’s wounded, ill and injured veterans, and my organization will not let any candidate for any office suggest anything otherwise.”

Hear Carson’s comments at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=814&v=VfGQG7oHCY>.

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ABOUT THE VFW: The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of war veterans and its oldest major veterans organization. With more than 1.7 million VFW and Auxiliary members located in more than 6,800 Posts worldwide, *“NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.”* The VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to veterans’ service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs. For more information or to join, visit our website at www.vfw.org.

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