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#### *The NRLN advocates the rights of more than 2 million American retirees from...*

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Employee / Nokia / North Memorial Medical Center / NSTAR /  
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Ohio Bell / OK Teachers / Oregon PERS / OSRAM Sylvania /  
PacBell / PBGC / PECO Energy / Pension Actuary / Pfizer / Phila  
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November 5, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chairman  
Environment and Public Works Committee  
United States Senate  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-5005

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

On behalf of the more than 2 million retirees in all 50 states represented by the National Retirees Legislative Network (NRLN), I am writing to thank you for introducing **S. 286, Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2019**. It is disappointing that the Committee on Finance has not acted on your bill.

It is unfortunate that Medicare does not currently allow beneficiaries to receive care from mental health counselors (MHCs) and marriage and family therapists (MFTs), even though MHCs and MFTs are required to obtain education and training equivalent to that of clinical social workers.

Your bill is important because it would expand the pool of mental health professionals by adding MHCs and MFTs to the network of providers delivering mental or behavioral health services to Medicare beneficiaries. Enacting **S. 286** would enable Medicare beneficiaries to receive the care they need from thousands of qualified professionals they currently are unable to visit.

I have also sent a letter to Representative Mike Thompson to thank him for introducing **H.R. 945**, the companion bill in the House.

The NRLN's full Legislative Agenda and detailed whitepapers can be found at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org). Your consideration on these issues would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

**Bill Kadereit**, President  
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