

Talking Points for 2009-2010

Resolution #1 from National Executive Committee /Louisville on VA and Health Care reform.

Priority Goal #1: Advanced Appropriations for the VA

- Federal appropriations must be timely, predictable, and sufficient to support the VA's delivery of quality health care to the nation's veterans.
- Congress must make it "two in a row" and a permanent requirement to appropriate funds for the VA two years out in order to allow VA to make operational decisions, and plans with funding certainty.

Priority Goal #2: Health Care Reform

- VA Health Care must be "fenced off" from the discussion on National Health Care Reform.
- VA health care should be considered an acceptable form of health insurance, it must not be taxed, and it must be allowed to promote health care for veterans unaffected by what ever form of "reform" is adopted.
- Passage of HR 3365, "Medicare VA Reimbursement Act of 2009," and a similar bill in the Senate, which will enhance and expand the VA's resources and ability to deliver services to the veteran population.
- This **must not** be a "Quid Pro Quo," where appropriations are cut relative to the amount received from Medicare.
- Improved post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury identification and treatment. The signature wounds of the OEF/OIF conflict to include mild TBI have complications which are hard to detect due to the lack of any objective diagnostic tests. Additionally, many of the symptoms especially of mild TBI are similar to symptoms associated with other conditions.
- The American Legion strongly supports the development of both objective and validated testing procedures for the determination and treatment of PTSD/TBI and mild TBI.

Priority Goal #3: Reduced Claims Backlog

- Quality instead of quantity in the VA claims process in order to reduce the backlog and expedite benefits to deserving veterans.
- In order to effectively reduce the nearly 1,000,000 case backlog, credit must be given for claims fairly and accurately adjudicated, rather than for those quickly rejected for minor technicalities.
- Consequences for shoddy reviews and repeated violation of veteran's best interests must be implemented.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Budget: Fiscal Year (FY) 2010

Program	FY 2009	HR3082	Appropriations Committee S 1407	The American Legion's FY 2011 Recommendations
Medical Services +	<i>\$30.7 billion</i>	<i>\$34.79 billion</i>	<i>\$45.1 billion (see + note.)</i>	\$48 billion (includes medical and prosthetics research)
Medical Administration +	<i>\$4.5 billion</i>	<i>\$4.4 billion</i>	<i>(see + note.)</i>	
Medical Facilities	<i>\$5 billion</i>	<i>\$5 billion</i>	<i>\$4.9 billion</i>	
Medical Care Total	\$40 billion	\$45.1 billion	\$45.1 billion	
Medical Care Recovery Fund	<i>(\$2.6 billion)</i>	<i>(\$10.2 billion)</i>	<i>(\$2.5 billion)</i>	*
Medical and Prosthetic Research	\$510 million	\$580 million	\$580 million	\$700 million
Major Construction	\$923 million	\$912 million	\$1.2 billion	\$2 billion
Minor Construction	\$742 million	\$726 million	\$726 million	\$1.5 billion
State Veterans Homes Grants	\$175 million	\$85 million	\$85 million	\$275 million
State Veterans Cemetery Grants	\$42 million	\$42 million	\$42 million	\$50 million
National Cemetery Administration	\$230 million	\$250 million	\$ 250 million	\$260 million
Information Technology	\$2.7 billion	\$3.4 billion	\$3.3 billion	\$3.8 billion
General Operating Expenses	\$1.8 billion	\$1.7 billion	\$2.1 billion	\$3.2 billion