



# BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

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July 8, 2003

The Honorable Lane Evans  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Veterans Affairs  
333 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Evans:

On behalf of the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), the only Congressionally chartered veterans service organization exclusively dedicated to serving the needs of our Nation's blinded veterans and their families, thank you for introducing House Resolution (H.R.) 2318, Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act of 2003. As always, your strong leadership is greatly appreciated.

Veterans have been shortchanged long enough. Every year it is the same cycle: the President sends forth a proposed budget that is never enough. Congress proposes a little more, which allows VA to squeak by for the rest of the year. The budget gets approved MAYBE a month after the fiscal year is started, and then a few months later the cycle starts again. This is no way to fund a health care system. Uncertainty about availability of resources diminishes VA's ability to recruit and retain essential health care professionals. H.R.2318 would remove this uncertainty.

Specialized services are not shielded from the effects of the budget shortfalls. While Blind Rehab is one of VA's finest programs, it is also one of the most resource intensive. The annual funding shortfalls place increasing pressure on VA's Blind Rehabilitation Service to find ways to reduce important resources to run its world-renowned Blind Rehabilitation Centers and services. H.R.2318 makes sure no veterans, especially those in need of specialized services such as blind rehabilitation, will be shortchanged because of budget shortfalls.

BVA looks forward to working with you to ensure passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Miller', is written over a faint, larger version of the signature.

Thomas H. Miller  
Executive Director

THM:r/v