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July 25, 2003

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the members of AMVETS (American Veterans), I write to urge you to add back \$1.8 billion to HR 2861, the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies appropriations bill, or defeat the measure.

Earlier this year, the House and Senate approved budget guidelines for the coming year calling for a \$3.2 billion increase in VA health care funding for fiscal year 2004. That level closely matched the recommendation, contained in the Independent Budget developed by AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. House leadership assured us that funding for veterans' health care would not be cut and that levels would fully meet the demands on the VA health care system.

The House Appropriations Bill funding level is \$1.8 billion below the budget and leadership promise. The bill is grossly inadequate and will not, repeat not, meet the health care needs of veterans next year. As currently stated, the bill would betray both the congressional budget and the leadership promise to fully fund VA health care.

If this bill is not amended to add back \$1.8 billion, you will see more of your constituent-veterans denied VA health care. Already more than 290,000 veterans either wait more than six months to see a VA doctor or are barred from enrollment in the system.

Again, AMVETS calls on you, to either add back \$1.8 billion or defeat the bill. Your vote on behalf of the brave men and women – past, present, and future – is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Jones  
National Legislative Director



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