

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2006

Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As your administration continues to formulate its FY 2008 budget submission, we write to request that you provide the necessary funding for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) health care system and related benefits programs. Unfortunately, we believe it is necessary to express our serious concern in this matter due to your administration's record of under-funding the VA by at least \$9 billion over the last 6 years. We are particularly concerned about veterans funding next year and in the future as your budget submission this year reduced veterans' funding by \$10 billion over the next 5 years.

Providing for our military veterans and their families is a continuing cost of war and should be an important component of our national defense policy. Indeed, President George Washington recognized this point, saying, "[t]he willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation." Mr. President, the time is right for your administration to change course and fully fund the VA, cease efforts to shift the costs of health care onto the backs of veterans, and finally recognize and implement the concept of 'shared sacrifice' with respect to the federal budget.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan along with the aging of our World War II, Korea and Vietnam War veterans have increased demand for VA services. However, year after year you request inadequate funding for veterans' health care. Each year your budget submission includes proposals to increase veterans' co-payments and fees, essentially taxing certain veterans for their health care. Each year your VA budget fails to request what is needed and relies on accounting gimmicks such as "management efficiencies" and inaccurate health care projections. Such efforts are transparent as the true consequences of your administration's budget flaws are being realized by current and future veterans. Indeed, recently VA officials themselves acknowledged that greater funding was needed to care for our servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffering from mental health disorders and traumatic brain injuries.

Mr. President, during your tenure, health care waiting lines have increased, appointments and medical procedures delayed, more than 250,000 veterans have been turned away from entering the VA health care system, and disability and education claims backlogs have grown to unreasonable rates. Moreover, Congress has been forced to add billions of dollars in supplemental VA funding due to embarrassing funding shortfalls.

What we request of you and your administration is simple – provide funding in your FY 2008 budget submission to ensure that our servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and the heroes from our previous conflicts receive the care and benefits they have earned and deserve.

Without question, Mr. President, the federal budget is a reflection of national policies and ultimately a reflection of our moral priorities. Please join us in working to provide the necessary resources in the fiscal year 2008 budget to fully fund the VA and to take care of our veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Nancy Pelosi

Lane Evans

Steny Hoyer

James E. Clyburn

John B. Rostenkowski

Mike Huelskamp

Tom O'Day

Jim P. Moran

Tom Blumenthal

John Spratt

Scott R.

Darlene Hrbky

Maureen Dindley

Sanford Bishop Jr.

Bob Filner

James J.

Ti Halden

Tom Lanto

Jane Harman

Janet Hillard

Louis M. Slaughter

Mrs. V. Gutierrez

Marcy Kaptur

Jim Oberstar

Alfred Hartwig

Ann. Dwyer

Helen Stiles

Dein Lu

Danny K. Davis

Bobby H. Rush

Bonnie A. Thompson

Bro Cameron

Steven H. Hahn

Jimmy V. Costello

Joe C. Lennano

George Miller

Rui Jarama

R. L. Lee

Gene Buchanan

Ed Pastor

Paul Szpak

Sam Gunn

Myra H. Velazquez

Walt Wren

Don B. Hallahan

Suzelle Poybal-Allard

Michael H. Michael

Paul Scott

Burt Aiss

Mike Doyle

Dr. Tuley

Alph. Lynch

Stephanie Smith

Kid Strickland

John Lewis

Hoyt D. 9th

Robert W. W. W.

Tim Ryan

Dennis W. Shultz

Wm. Lacy Clay

Lois Capps

Gregory W. W.

Michael W. W.

Lucy Cheek Kiepatnick

Vita M. Tracy

Maq. Watt

Judith Nadler

SLB

Coralyn B. Mabrey

Doris O. Matsui

Marion Bury

And' Rahal

Barl Gordon

Chaka Farrah

Jack Lew.

Richard Sheal

Lynn Woodsey

Rosa L. DeFauris

Peter J. Viselovsky

Berry Funk

Gay L. Ackermann

Jim Maran

Ben Duke

Ed Dow

Howard L. Bertram

Leon Cunningham

William S. McHugh

Ben Cardie

Donald Mayne

Paul K. Stree

William H. Vetter

Pety McFy

Janis Price

Colli C. Palmer

Gene Taylor

Ruib Baucher

Elijah E. Cummings

Melvin L. Watts

Ernest L. Engel

Paul Zell

John W. Am
12

John Bann

Tom Alb

Ty 3

Ellen D. Juschke

Jim McDemott

Kendrick B. Meek

Betty McCullen

Jan Staley
Janey Baldwin

David Wu

Russ Holt

Stephane Puhls Jora

Jim Cox

Barbara Lee

Emanuel Lee

Ben Chandler

Dennis Krimmel

Michael E. Cooper

J. Cooper

Dana Belle He

Julie Carson

Jan M. Chute

John J. Delaney

Earl Pomeroy

Ron Kind

Dan J. Moon

Miris Van Hellen

Rail M. Higilwa

Rolon Emanuel

Vin Snyder

Allen Boyd

Sam Farr

Lamil Epstein

Bob Jones

Brian Baird

Brette Sanchez

Brian Curran

John D.

Melissa L. Bean

Harold

Joe Brown

John Brown

Ed Case

Jim Matheson

Tom Turner

Trinda J. Sincely

Jim Munkell

Mike Row

Charles A. Goff

Pete Stark

Arth Davis

Bob Tofy

Grace J. Neapolitano

Neil Abernethy

C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberg

Eddie Brian John

W. Alford

Tom Clark

Leonard C. Brown

Ausan A. Davis

Norm Hicks

Solomon P. Ortiz

Ruben Hingoria

Bill Pascrell Jr

Bell Delakunt

Earl Blumenau

Carine Brown

Paul E. A.

Mike Medvitye

Shirley Jackson Lee

Carolyn McCarthy

Jim Langerin

Rich Tausen

John F. Tierney
and Shoo

Charm E. Watson

John Smith

Mike Thompson

Shelley Garkley

Eric

Jim McDevitt

Madeline J. Radello

Angela J. Scavone

Frank Pelloni Jr.

Carl Butterfield Jr.

Jim Quinn

Patrick F. Keenan

Stan Tsvan

Ed. H. H. H.

W. A. H.

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Edward J. Morday

Henry Duellar

Brad Sherer

Ed. S. Hill

W. A. H.
