

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

We write in response to a deeply troubling policy proposal that has been discussed in conjunction with the release of your Administration's Budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). For weeks now, leaders of Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) have alluded to developing proposals that would require Veterans' private insurance to be billed for care provided in treatment of service-connected injuries and disabilities. Currently, the VA bears the full cost of such treatment.

Though private insurance can currently be billed for treatment of non-service connected conditions, expanding this policy to service-related care ignores the mission of the VA: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." We cannot compromise on the promise we have made to those who serve our Nation. To this end, we respectfully oppose any proposal to bill Veterans' personal insurers for care or treatment of disability or injuries incurred as a result of honorable military service to the United States.

We appreciate that you have made caring for Veterans, their families, and survivors, one of its top priorities. This is evidenced by your budget, under which VA discretionary resources for the first time ever exceed the amount recommended by the Independent Budget – a set of Budget and program recommendations assembled by the leading VSOs. That is no small feat.

However, in the desire to cut costs we cannot lay the burden on those Veterans who have already given so much. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns regarding these issues.

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Washington, DC 20515

Sincerely,

Yr Kind Pat John T. Adams

Henry Teague

Walt Minch

am

Robert Pifer

Anna Titus

Shelley Berkeley

Cc: House Budget Committee