

Congress Crafting Final VA Funding For FY 2008: Meeting the Needs of America's Veterans

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In the final hours of the days of the First Session of the 110th Congress, lawmakers are working to complete the Federal funding for FY 2008.

Earlier this year, both the House and the Senate supported an increase in VA funding that meet The American Legion National Commander's budget recommendations. Unfortunately, that legislation never reached the White House and is among the remaining appropriations bills to be completed.

This would be a good time to call lawmakers and remind them that America is still a nation at war. Veterans, both young and old, are turning to VA for timely access to quality health care. Recently separated military veterans are seeking timely adjudication of their service-connected disability claims, using their Montgomery GI Bill educational benefits, and trying to reenter the civilian workforce.

VA needs funding to meet the health care needs of those veterans currently enrolled in the VA health care delivery system, to hire PTSD counselors to work with returning OEF/OIF veterans, and to hire claims adjudicators to help reduce the unacceptable claims backlog. All veterans - past, present, and future - need a Department of Veterans Affairs that meets their needs. That is the ongoing cost of war – the price of freedom.

Time is of the essence! Please call your representative and both of your senators. Let them know that it is critical that they pass the VA Budget with adequate funding so the VA can successfully implement programs that are crucial to the veterans' community. Encourage fellow veterans, family and friends to voice their support, as well. If you cannot get through to the Washington, DC offices, please contact local congressional offices within your state.

Capitol Switchboard: 1-877-851-6437, 1-800-828-0498, or 1-800-614-2803. Ask for the office you would like to speak to. You can also request that one office transfer you to the next office. Most staff members are happy to do so.