

From: March, Joseph H.
To: Public Relations Division
Sent: 10/14/2009 1:12:23 PM
Subject: Release: The American Legion cheers "landmark" VA appropriations measure

Attachments:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Legion cheers "landmark" VA appropriations measure

WASHINGTON, DC (October 14, 2009) - A long campaign by The American Legion has come to a victorious conclusion with Senate passage yesterday of the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, better known as the "VA Advance Appropriations Bill."

The act authorizes financial appropriations for Veterans Affairs Department medical care programs one year in advance of the start of each fiscal year. It was already approved by the House of Representatives and is now on its way to President Obama's desk for signature.

National Commander Clarence E. Hill of The American Legion was greatly pleased when he learned of the Senate action last night. "Imagine having to live paycheck-to-paycheck, but not knowing how much that paycheck would be or when it would arrive," Hill said. "That's the situation the VA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has been in. This has resulted in hardships for the agency and even compromises in care to veterans.

"I have every confidence that President Obama will sign this act into law and thus resolve this longstanding problem," continued Hill. "This is a milestone measure and The American Legion celebrates it."

Hill has sent thank you letters to congressional leaders instrumental in shepherding the bill and to President Obama. His letter to the President reads, in part:

"Your signature enacting this critical piece of legislation would be greatly appreciated and a noteworthy achievement. The American Legion believes this bill will go down in history as landmark legislation in the veterans' community."

With a current membership of 2.5-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

-30-

Media contacts: Craig Roberts, (202) 263-2982, Cell (202) 406-0887 or Joe March, (317) 630-1253, Cell (317) 748-1926. A high resolution photo of Nat. Cmdr. Hill is available at www.legion.org.