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**American Legion national commander meets with president at White House**

WASHINGTON (March 28, 2011) – President Barack Obama hosted American Legion National Commander Jimmie L. Foster at a March 28 White House meeting to discuss several veterans issues, including ways to help the Department of Veterans Affairs reduce its disability claims backlog.

Foster said he expressed The American Legion’s gratitude to the Obama Administration for its emphasis on addressing the needs of military families. Foster asked the president to talk to the Department of Defense about making it easier for veterans service organizations to get in touch with returning veterans, in order to better assist them and their families.

With 20 years of experience as a department service officer, finding ways to reduce the VA claims backlog is of special interest to Foster. He suggested to Obama that the Legion could help by coordinating the formation of a veterans service organization task force that could offer advice and ideas to VA on ways to improve the current claims process.

“We talked about the caregivers bill,” Foster said. “He actually beat me to that punch, saying that it’s going to roll out here in the next couple of weeks.”

Another topic Foster discussed with Obama was the need for more civilian agencies to accept military training and experience for licensing and certification in a variety of professions.

“Overall, I think it went well – a great dialogue and no interruptions,” Foster said. “It was very relaxed. The president was very open, listened to everything, and (we) even had a laugh or two. We appreciate him taking the time out of his busy schedule.”

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