

From: [Raughter, John B.](#)
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American Legion: VA Budget Gets Mixed Reviews

INDIANAPOLIS (February 14, 2012) – Grateful that the Obama administration’s VA budget avoids the draconian cuts that are facing the Pentagon, the leader of the nation’s largest veterans organization called the 2013 plan for the department “better than a Valentine, but well-short of Christmas.”

“More than 1 million active-duty servicemembers will join the ranks of 22 million civilian veterans during the next five years,” American Legion National Commander Fang A.Wong said. “We must have a budget that is prepared to recognize their outstanding service by meeting their needs for health care, jobs, housing and education. For the most part, this \$140.3 billion budget does that.”

Wong praised the creation of the Veterans Job Corps, which VA estimates will put up to 20,000 veterans to work. “The top priority for most veterans leaving the service is to obtain meaningful employment. It’s one reason that The American Legion sponsors job fairs across the country. With this new program, we won’t have to go it alone.”

The increase in the disability pay and pension budgets are also provisions that The American Legion welcomes, according to Wong.

“On the other hand, we are very disappointed that the major construction budget is taking a big hit. There are facilities that desperately need completion in Denver and Orlando. How will this affect the thousands of veterans in those areas? VA construction, both major and minor, is woefully underfunded,” Wong said.

The 2.4 million member 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.