For Immediate Release

Legion commends Congress for VA Bill, Choice Reforms

WASHINGTON (July 30, 2015) – The head of the nation’s largest veterans service organization praised Congress for passing a measure to fill a $3.4 billion funding gap, which threatened to close VA hospitals and clinics across the country.

“While it’s frustrating that VA did not do a better job of budgeting, we need to look to the future,” American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm said. “Earlier this month, I called on Congress to do its job, and now it has delivered. Under this legislation, VA will be able to pay for the expensive but essential Hepatitis C medication that veterans need. This bill also reforms the Veterans Choice Fund by moving to consolidate seven different programs that had conflicting and confusing criteria. Veterans should not have to pay the price for the administrative mistakes made by others. We appreciate that Congress has provided the needed funding and reforms. Some of the problems at VA that caused this budget shortfall could happen again if we don’t hold VA accountable. Therefore, we call on President Obama to put aside his earlier threat to veto the VA Accountability Act of 2015 and sign it immediately if it passes in the Senate.”

With a current membership of 2.2 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 nearly 14,000 posts across the nation.

Media Contact: Andrea Dickerson, (202) 263-2982 / cell (202) 417-4090
adickerson@legion.org; John Raughter, (317) 630-1350 / cell (317) 441-8847, jraughter@legion.org