

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Cincinnati, Ohio
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

**Resolution No. 188: Department of Veterans Affairs' Role in National Emergency
Preparedness
Origin: Georgia
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, Under title 38, United States Code, 8111A, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been established as the principal medical care back-up for military health care “during and immediately following a period of war, or a period of national emergency declared by the President or the Congress that involves the use of the Armed Forces in armed conflict”; and

WHEREAS, Under the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) and the Federal Response Plan (FRP) VA’s specialized duties entail conducting and evaluating disaster and terrorist attack simulation exercises; managing the nation’s stockpile of pharmaceuticals for biological and chemical toxins; maintaining a rapid response team for radiological releases; and training public and private NDMS medical center personnel around the country in properly responding to biological, chemical, or radiological disasters; and

WHEREAS, The VA Strategic Plan for 2014-2020 lists as an objective, “Ensure Preparedness to Provide Services and Protect People and Assets Continuously and in Time of Crisis”; and

WHEREAS, If VA is to play a key supporting role as part of the FRP and the NDMS, it must have adequate resources to execute its role; and

WHEREAS, The Strategic Capital Investment Planning process was designed to ensure that VA’s capital infrastructure meets the needs of veterans for health care services in 2011 and beyond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) implementation of the Strategic Capital Investment Planning decision must take into consideration and sustain VA’s ability to perform its fourth mission as a back up to the Department of Defense; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to take an active role in the development and implementation of plans to enhance Federal homeland security initiatives; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion strongly urges Congress to provide VA with the funding necessary to further enhance its capacity to act as a back-up to the Department of Defense in times of war and to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in responding to national emergencies.