From: March, Joseph H.
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Attachments:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mil Con, VA Appropriations Bill Earns Full Support of The American Legion

WASHINGTON (July 10, 2009) - The national commander of the nation's largest veterans' service organization expressed appreciation for the House's passage of H.R. 3082, a bill that would greatly increase VA funding.

The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Appropriations for FY 2010, would provide $48.2 billion in advance appropriations for three VA medical accounts: Medical services; medical support and compliance; and medical facilities.

"This additional funding is an 8 percent increase compared to fiscal year 2010," said National Commander David K. Rehbein. "There are many people in Congress to thank for this increase, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey and Subcommittee Chairman Chet Edwards. These members and this bill put veterans first and is a reminder that this nation cherishes the service and sacrifice of those who have worn the uniform."

The bill, which also includes other provisions that The American Legion supports, provides an additional $4.4 billion for the Veterans Health Administration in 2010. It provides additional money for mental health services, homeless veterans and medical research. The bill includes funding for 28 new Vet Centers and 30 new Community Based Outpatient Clinics.

Overall, HR 3082 would provide $77.9 billion in discretionary spending for FY 2010, including money for the Global War on Terrorism. The House passed the bill Friday afternoon.

"There are many things to like in this bill," Rehbein said. "It is pro-veteran and pro-military. I urge the Senate to follow suit and for the president to sign it." Shortly after his election as National Commander, Rehbein testified before a joint session of the Veterans' Affairs Committees and outlined The American Legion's funding recommendations for FY 2010 and support for advance appropriations for VA medical care accounts. This bill would meet or exceed those recommendations.

"VA exists to fulfill its obligation to veterans. It is our position that we should let them." Rehbein testified at the time. The Legion believes that if HR 3082 is made law, VA will be in a much stronger position to deliver quality service.

With a current membership of 2.6 million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and the mentoring of youth. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

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Media contacts: Joe March or John Raughter (317) 630-1253 or Craig Roberts (202) 263-2982. A high resolution photo of Nat. Cmdr. Rehbein is available at www.legion.org.