

Mahoney Commends Largest Funding Increase to Veterans' Health Care in History

Congressional Funding Fulfilling Promises to American Veterans Approved by President

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(Washington, D.C.) - Representative Tim Mahoney (FL-16) hailed the President's release yesterday of the \$3.7 billion in additional veterans funding provided by Congress - to provide the largest single funding increase in the 77-year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"After years of being neglected by Washington, our veterans will now have the resources and benefits they have earned. This historic funding increase, combined with our Wounded Warriors Act, makes good on this new Congress' promises to honor American veterans and helps meet the critical need for funding. I am happy that the Bush Administration recognized this need and prioritized those who have served our country." said Representative Mahoney.

With the release of today's funds, the 110th Congress has provided an extra \$6.7 billion over last year for the largest single funding increase in the 77-year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs:

§ Strengthening quality health care for 5.8 million patients, including about 263,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, in the 5th year of the war in Iraq;

§ Investing in much-needed maintenance for VA health care facilities and treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury for returning veterans;

§ Reducing the backlog of veterans (400,000 claims) waiting for their earned benefits by adding 1,800 claims processors.

§ Building on the first steps by this Congress at the beginning of 2007 -- increasing veterans' health care and benefits by \$5.2 billion for improved care and shorter waiting lines for veterans waiting 177 days to receive their earned benefits.

Most veterans receiving VA health care are struggling to get into the middle class, with a median annual income of \$23,000.

This increase won widespread support and praise from America's leading veterans' organizations including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Officers Association of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AmVets, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, National Association for Uniformed Services and Disabled American Veterans.

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