

Legislative Accomplishments: Veterans Issues

- Congressman Mahoney started a Veterans Advisory Committee made up of veterans from all eight counties in FL-16 and includes veterans who fought in all the major wars of the past 50 years. This group meets quarterly to discuss issues facing the veterans' community.

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Mahoney helped pass the Wounded Warriors Assistance Act of 2007, H.R. 1538. This bill takes the first step in addressing the problems brought to light by the inadequate living conditions and the administrative problems experienced by some service members at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and other facilities. This bill reduces caseloads for case managers, so service members can get the help they need when they need it, and improve the transition for service members when they leave the Armed Forces and enter the VA system. Passed House March 25, 2006, RC# 208

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Mahoney is working to improve veterans care facilities.

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Mahoney joined with several colleagues in sending a letter to Comptroller General, David Walker, requesting that the non-partisan, independent Government Accountability Office audit all VA and military facilities in order to improve the quality of veterans' care facilities. This letter was written as a result of the patient care problems at Walter Reed Medical Center (April 27, 2007).

Mahoney

cosponsored the Pay Veterans First Act, H.R. 2292

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H.R. 2292 would freeze bonuses for the senior political appointees at the VA until the backlog of pending disability claims is reduced from the current estimate of 600,000 estimated to fewer than 100,000. (05/14/2007)

- Mahoney

also voted for the following bills on 5/23/07:

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Traumatic

Brain Injury/Rural Veterans Outreach, H.R. 2199

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Ensures that our veterans are properly screened for Traumatic Brain Injury and receive the appropriate treatment. More than half of combat casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan have associated brain injuries, often due to improvised explosive devices. The legislation also expands VA resources to provide rural communities with "mobile vet centers" for mental health services and benefits outreach.

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Returning

Service member VA Healthcare Insurance Act, H.R. 612

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Helps ensure soldiers with mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder that are often not immediately diagnosed are treated by making veterans eligible for health care due to combat service for five years after leaving active duty.

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Veterans

Outreach Improvement Act, H.R. 67

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Allows the VA to partner with state and local governments to reach out to veterans and their families in ensuring they receive the benefits they have earned.

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Early

Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act, H.R. 2239

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Extends eligibility for rehabilitation benefits from the Veterans' Affairs Department.

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Chiropractic
Care Available to All Veterans Act, H.R. 1470

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Requires that chiropractic care and services be provided to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

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Mahoney
voted to provide the VA with an additional \$5.3 billion for FY 2007.
(Funding for FY07, FY07 Emergency Supplemental) This money will help ease backlogs on processing cases, address maintenance delays at VA facilities, and will allow the VA to generally provide better services to all of those who have honorably served our country. This bill was incorporated into H.R. 2206, the US Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007. (Passed the House on 5/10/2007; Public Law 110-028 on 5/25/2007.)

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Mahoney
voted to increase the military health budget this year (FY 2007) by more than \$4 billion, including additional money for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder treatment and funding for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research.
(Funding for FY 07, FY 07 Emergency Supplemental) This bill was incorporated into H.R. 2206, the US Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007. (Passed the House on 5/10/2007; Public Law 110-028 on 5/25/2007.)

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Mahoney
Requested Investigation of Troop Body Armor

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In a letter to David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the United States, Mahoney requested that the Government Accountability Office conduct an investigation that would reassess body armor systems currently being issued by all the military services and the Special Operations Command for effectiveness and reliability against the threats facing our troops in combat

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(Letter dated 06/06/2007)

- Mahoney
supported H.R. 23, The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007

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H.R. 23 would establish a Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide monthly payments in the amount of \$1,000 to qualifying members of the United States Merchant Marine, Army Transport Service, and Naval Transport Service who served during World War II.

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Passed the House by Voice Vote on 7/30/2007

- Mahoney
cosponsored H.R. 2874, the Veterans' Health Care Improvement Act of 2007

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H.R. 2874 would improve VA's capacity in several areas, including mental health and homelessness by providing grants to conduct workshop programs to assist in the therapeutic readjustment and rehabilitation of veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations.

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Passed the House by Voice Vote on 7/30/2007

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Voted to significantly increase funding for the military healthcare system by \$1.7 billion last year and \$416 million above the President's request. Additionally Mahoney supported rejecting the President's proposal to inflict \$1.9 billion in TRICARE fee and premium increases on our troops, supported investments in improving the Department's electronic medical records and fostering better coordination between DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs, enhancing preventative medicine programs and military medical research.

H.R. 3222; RC# 846; passed 8/5/2007; 208-12

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Signed into law 11/13/07;
Public Law: 110-116

- Introduced
and passed H.R. 2779, to designate
the Navy UDT-SEALs Museum in Ft. Pierce, Florida as the Official National Museum
of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

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This museum, which is housed at the birthplace
of the SEALs, honors the history and legacy of our nation's most elite
warriors.

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Passed the House by Voice Vote on 10/1/2007

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Signed into law on 11/13/07; Public Law 110-115

- Mahoney
consistently voted for Increases in funding for the Veteran's
Administration to ensure veterans receive the services they deserve

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Mahoney voted for a \$6.7 billion increase
for the Veterans Administration, the largest single increase for VA in its 77
year history in the of the Administration

Military
Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill, June 15, 2007

This was later included in the FY08 Omnibus Appropriations bill
(H.R. 2764) which was passed by the House on 12/19/07 272-142 Roll No. 1186;
Signed into law 12/26/07 Public Law 110-161

- Mahoney
joins the Veterans' Mental Health Caucus.
The caucus will work to increase awareness of the mental health care needs of returning veterans, treatment options, job training and readjustment, suicide prevention, and funding needs.

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6/08

- Mahoney
was an original cosponsor of H.R. 5740, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008.

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Will provide a full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

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This bill was incorporated into H.R. 2642, Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008, Passed House on 06/19/2008, (RC # 432, 416-12)

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Became Public Law on 06/30/2008 No: 110-252

- Mahoney rejects cuts to military healthcare provider TRICARE and supports H.R. 6331, The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008.

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Medicare physician reimbursement rates were scheduled to be cut by 10.6% on July 1, 2008. Since TRICARE borrows its physician payment rates from Medicare, TRICARE would have also suffered from this cut. H.R. 6331, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008, prevents the 10.6% reduction in physician reimbursement payments that was scheduled to take place on July 1, 2008. It also provides a payment freeze for 2008 and a 1.1% update for 2009.

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RC#443; 6/24/08, 355-59.

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7/9/2008 Cleared for White House; President has threatened to veto.