

Mahoney Votes to Increase Funding for Veterans and Troops

Provides \$3.4 Billion More Than President Requested;
Increases Mileage Reimbursement for Veterans To 41 Cents

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(Washington, DC)-

Today, Congressman Tim Mahoney (FL-16) voted to support H.R. 6599, Military Construction-VA Appropriations for FY 2009, which provides \$118.7 billion for military construction and veterans programs. The bill provides \$10.3 billion (10%) more than the current spending level and \$3.4 billion (3%) more than the President's request. It passed by a vote of 409-4.

"This bill sends a message to our veterans and troops that as you have kept your promises to this country, America will keep its promises to you. It builds on the historic work accomplished in the 2008 bill for America's veterans, the largest increase in the 77 year history of the Veterans Administration, and it helps ensure that the VA is able to provide the best care both now, and in the future, for our veterans," said Congressman Mahoney. "Furthermore, this bill improves our active forces' training and their quality of life while they are enlisted."

H.R.

6599 Military Construction-VA Appropriations provides substantially more funding than what the Administration requested for the Veterans' Affairs (VA) Department's health programs; the measure provides \$2.5 billion (7%) more than the president proposed for VA health programs and 9% more than the current level. It also appropriates \$5 billion for VA hospitals and other medical facilities, 13% more than requested.

The bill includes:

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Full funds BRAC, and provides for the modernization of training facilities, as well as the building of child care centers, barracks, and homes;

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An additional \$136 million to rebuild and modernize medical facilities;

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\$47.7 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs to hire 1,400 new claims processors in addition to the 703 additional personnel that were included in the budget submission;

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\$568 million to increase enrollment of Priority 8 veterans by 10 percent;

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\$50 million more to increase the gas mileage reimbursement rate from 28.5 cents to 41 cents per mile for veterans traveling distances for care;

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\$200 million to increase access to fee-based care for veterans in areas where the Department does not offer services;

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\$40 million more to provide the additional case workers and medical services needed for our homeless veterans.

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