

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC

Dear President Obama,

We write to register our deep concern with recently announced plans to force veterans to rely on private insurance company payments for treatment for service-connected injuries.

The American Legion's National Commander, Dave Rehbein, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Executive Director, Paul Rieckhoff, already publicly expressed the strong opposition of their membership to this plan. These two organizations alone represent more than 3 million American veterans.

We, the citizens of America, owe veterans our care through our government. Veterans should not depend on private insurance companies who bear no moral bond to soldiers or their pain.

One of President Washington's first missions was to care for veterans. President Lincoln promised "...to care for him who bore the brunt of battle, his widow and his orphan..." It seems clear to us what Lincoln would advise here.

We urge you to reconsider this private reimbursement plan and instead ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs has the resources it needs to fulfill its mandate to treat service-connected injuries and disabilities. Private companies bear them no obligation. We, and our federal government, owe them everything.

Sincerely,

Clark W. Det John Emerson
Frank Sobinole Dan Tuck of Rady Forbes

Todd Kibst Todd R. Platts Lynn Jenkins

Gregg Walter B. Jones Candice A. Miller

Leonard Lence Stacy Ginny Brown White

Ann Shuck Bill Hillier Adrian Smith

TJ Jack Kline Jeff Jarvis

Jim Schumbrenner Dyl Walker John Bunt