

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2007

Office of the Speaker  
H-232, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Madam Speaker:

We write to urge you in the strongest possible terms to reach a prompt agreement on the conference report on the FY2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act (H.R. 2642). Few issues are more important than adequate funding for our nation's veterans. The leadership in the House cannot allow this critically important funding to fall victim to the usual partisan wrangling which occurs all too often in Washington.

Veterans should not be used as tools for political bargaining and gamesmanship. Both the House and Senate passed the FY08 MilCon-Veterans appropriations with overwhelming majorities because our commitment to veterans rises above partisan squabbling. Tragedies such as the recent revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center must never be repeated. The findings of insufficient care at Walter Reed and other facilities should be seen by Congress as a mandate to finish the work and live up to the promises we have made to our veterans.

After decades of flat funding, total VA budget rose from \$48 billion in FY 2001 to approximately \$70 billion in FY 2006, a 46 percent increase. This year, the House voted to increase funding by \$6 billion dollars over FY07, one of the largest in the 77 year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Both the Senate and House versions received overwhelming majority support passing by a vote of 409-2 in the House and 92-1 in the Senate.

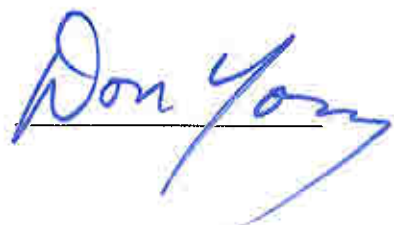
Earlier in the year, the new Majority agreed they would continue the trend of significant increases in veterans funding begun by the Republican Congress. We ask you to honor that agreement and see that the commitment we made to our veterans is honored.

We must never forget the sacrifice of our veterans. As members of Congress, we have a solemn obligation to fulfill our promises to them. We ask for you to look past the heightened partisanship of our times and unite us on this issue by making it a first priority to quickly bring a stand alone Veterans appropriations bill through conference so the Congress may present the President with a bill by October 1, 2007.

We stand ready to assist you in reaching this goal.

Sincerely,



Ny Walden

Pat Gay

Pete Sessions

Marilyn Musgrave

Tan Turodo

Paul Ryan

Ron Lewis

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Louis Lohmeyer

K. [Signature]

Thomas Price

Rf Rye

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Jim Walling

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Jody Foster

Mary Feller

Gene Schmidt

Jane [Signature]

John Klein

Gov M. Bilek

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Emily Brown-Water

Adri Smith

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Mike Fuger Sue Myrick

Joe Hensarling

Mary Bono Geoff Davis

Barbara Cubin

Tom Hille Thelma Drake

Scott Garrett

Jeff Miller Steve King

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cc: Majority Leader Harry Reid  
cc: Minority Leader Mitch McConnell  
cc: Minority Leader John Boehner  
cc: Chairman David Obey  
cc: Ranking Member Jerry Lewis