

VFW Salutes Passage of 2009 VA Budget

Oct 01, 2008

WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is saluting the 110th Congress for providing \$50.2 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs fiscal year 2009 budget.

As part of the \$634 billion Continuing Resolution signed by President Bush yesterday, VA discretionary funding is increased \$4.5 billion over last year, which meets Independent Budget recommendations for healthcare funding. The Independent Budget is a detailed analysis of VA operations that the VFW has co-authored for the past 22 years with AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

VA budget highlights include \$3.8 billion for mental healthcare, \$584 million for substance abuse programs, \$510 million for medical and prosthetic research, \$250 million to improve access for veterans in rural areas, and additional funding for homeless grants, the hiring of 2,000 additional claims adjudicators, and to raise the mileage reimbursement rate from 28.5 to 41.5 cents per mile.

“We are very grateful to the president and to congressional leadership for keeping to their pledge to take care of our veterans,” said VFW National Commander Glen Gardner, a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas. “And we hope the delivery of an on-time budget is the start of a trend that will continue into the next administration and Congress.”

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