

VFW Calls New VA Appropriations Bill 'Bad for Veterans'

House of Representatives is set to penalize disabled veterans

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WASHINGTON — The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States said the U.S. House of Representatives is set to penalize disabled veterans this week if it votes to reduce the Department of Veterans Affairs budget request by more than \$1.5 billion.

“The nationwide crisis in care and confidence that erupted in the VA last year was caused in many ways by a lack of adequate resourcing that only Congress is authorized to provide,” said John W. Stroud, who leads the 1.9 million-member VFW and its Auxiliaries. “That’s why the VFW is demanding that the House amend this bill to appropriate a funding level that fully funds VA.”

In its current form, the fiscal year 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill makes across-the-board cuts to all VA discretionary accounts, and drastically underfunds medical care, major construction and Information Technology accounts. Stroud said across-the-board cuts to discretionary spending is what Congress created back in 2011, but by another name, sequestration. Now the House wants to impose its own sequester on a federal department whose sole mission is to care for wounded, ill and injured veterans.

“The VA cannot fulfill its mission without proper funding, but the House for whatever reason now wants to ration care, eliminate infrastructure projects, and stop improving upon the programs and services that the VA was created to provide,” said the VFW national commander. “This bill is bad for veterans and any vote for it is unconscionable, which is why we want veterans and advocates everywhere to get involved by urging their elected officials to fully fund the VA.”

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