VFW Applauds House Effort to Fund VA in Advance

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The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., the nation's largest organization of combat veterans, is applauding yesterday's announcement from House Veterans Affairs Committee leadership to fully fund the Department of Veterans Affairs one year in advance.

House VA Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, R-Fla., and Ranking Member Mike Michaud, D-Maine, introduced the "Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013," or H.R. 813, which would require Congress to fully fund VA's discretionary budget one year ahead of schedule. The measure would ensure that all VA services would have timely and predictable funding at a time of fiscal uncertainty for the nation.

"The VFW applauds Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Michaud for coming together and recognizing that our veterans deserve timely and predictable care and benefits," said VFW National Commander John Hamilton, a combat wounded Marine Corps rifleman in Vietnam. "Regardless of the difficult fiscal decisions our country may need to make, we can never abandon our responsibility to care for the men and women who have borne the battle."

VA health care, which accounts for nearly 86 percent of the total VA budget, is already funded one year in advance, thanks to VFW's strong advocacy of the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009. Advance appropriations for VA health care has allowed VA to deliver consistent care and properly plan for future needs. The goal of H.R. 813 is to allow all of VA to similarly plan for the future by investing in areas like information technology, claims processing and construction.

The VFW urges swift passage of this much needed bill.

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