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## VA Health Care Funding Reform Moves Toward Final Victory

### Major Win in House Puts Bill in Senate's Hands

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9 - The House of Representatives Thursday gave overwhelming final approval to legislation that will provide sufficient, timely and predictable funding for veterans health care programs.

By a 419-1 vote, the House passed H.R. 1016, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act. The Senate is expected to quickly approve this legislation, which the President has vowed to sign.

"For two decades, the Disabled American Veterans and other veterans service organizations have worked to reform the budget and appropriations process to ensure that veterans receive the health care they have earned in a timely manner," said DAV National Commander Roberto Barrera. "With the historic House vote, we are on the brink of a long-overdue victory that will help ensure timely access to medical care for the men and women who have served, are serving and will serve in defense of our nation."

The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act authorizes Congress to approve veterans medical care funding one year in advance to better meet the anticipated demand for veterans health care services. The advanced funding will give the Department of Veterans Affairs up to a full year to plan for the most effective and efficient way of delivering medical care. Additionally, this would require the Government Accountability Office to audit the budget development process to ensure that sufficient funds are included.

"This legislation will help every disabled veteran and every future disabled veteran," said Commander Barrera. "This is happening because so many of DAV's members and supporters have stepped up and called on Congress to put an end to chronic lapses in budgets almost every year for decades. We stood up for veterans together, and veterans and their families are going to benefit."

Commander Barrera expressed DAV's gratitude to members of the House of Representatives who played leading roles in getting the legislation approved.

"Rep. Bob Filner, Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced the advance appropriations legislation, fought for its approval, moved it through his committee and negotiated the compromise with the Senate reflected in the legislation. Chairman Filner has proven to be a reliable and effective leader, always willing to stand up for our nation's veterans," Barrera said.

"Advance appropriations legislation would not have been passed without the

support of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose passion and commitment to America's veterans are regularly demonstrated in her leadership of the House," Barrera said.

"Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey's public backing of advance appropriations was one of the most significant moments leading to our success," said Barrera. "Veterans across the country owe a debt of gratitude to Chairman Obey; not only for helping this legislation succeed, but also for his unwavering efforts to increase funding for veterans health care programs each year."

"Rep. Michael Michaud, who chairs the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health, was one of the earliest supporters of advance appropriations and played a crucial role in building support for the legislation in the House. Rep. Michaud continues to be one of the most astute and courageous legislators in Congress on behalf of all veterans," said Barrera.

"Rep. Chet Edwards, who is Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, has always been a great friend to America's veterans, constantly fighting for increased funding for VA programs. Rep. Edwards' support for sufficient, timely and predictable funding for veterans health care was vital to the success of the advance appropriations legislation," Barrera said.

"Years before H.R. 1016 was developed, Rep. Phil Hare was leading the fight in the House to secure guaranteed funding for VA health care," Barrera said. "When the advance appropriations legislation was proposed as a new alternative to achieving funding reform, Rep. Hare unhesitatingly signed on in support, and DAV applauds him for putting the interests of veterans first."

"Rep. Walter Jones has a long and consistent record of standing up for veterans regardless of the political or partisan costs involved. As the lead Republican sponsor, Rep. Jones played an important role in making this a bipartisan effort, as demonstrated by the 419 to 1 vote in favor of H.R. 1016," said Barrera.

The 1.2 million-member Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932, represents this nation's disabled veterans. It is dedicated to a single purpose: building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. More information is available at [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).