

# VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

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## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 1, 2009

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 2.2 million men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and our Auxiliaries, I am writing to urge your support for an amendment Senator Inhofe is offering to the Budget Resolution, S. Con. Res. 13. His amendment would protect advanced appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from being subject to a point of order. An advanced appropriation for VA is among this organization's highest priorities. We strongly urge you to support and adopt this amendment.

An advanced appropriation would improve the VA health care system. Although we sincerely appreciate the dramatic increases in health care funding over the last few years, last year's timely budget was the exception. Far too often, VA receives its funding late – as has been the case in 19 of the last 22 fiscal years.

It is extremely difficult to run a health care system – especially one as large as VA – without on-time funding. It is even more difficult to *efficiently* manage one under those circumstances.

Late budgets mean that VA cannot attract and recruit high-quality health care professionals, as its managers are unsure of whether or not they will have the funding they need to retain them.

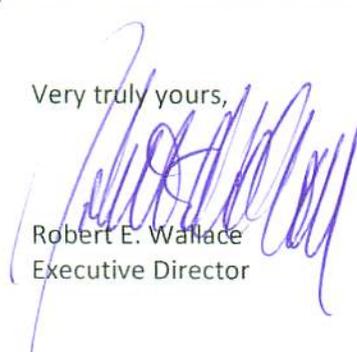
Late budgets mean that VA cannot spend its money in the most efficient ways, especially when lateness means they receive the bulk of their funding in the second half of the fiscal year, and it is given under a "spend it or lose it" guideline.

Simply put, if VA's leaders do not have a budget in advance, they cannot plan properly.

Supporting this amendment would clear a procedural roadblock for the eventual enactment of advanced appropriation legislation. It would be the first step towards fixing a huge problem in the VA health care system, and it could ultimately lead to higher quality health care for America's veterans.

We strongly urge you to join Senator Inhofe and the other supporters of the advanced appropriation concept by voting for this amendment, which is so important to the VFW's members, and the entire veteran community.

Very truly yours,



Robert E. Wallace  
Executive Director

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★

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