

Michaud Praises House Passage of Bill Increasing Funding for Veterans

Thursday, July 31 2008

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"I have been working hard with my fellow committee colleagues to advocate for this funding," said Michaud. "This bill builds upon last year's largest ever increase in the 77-year history of the VA. The bill also adds to this year's passage of a new GI education bill, critical reforms to our military health system, and a pay raise for our troops. I look forward to continuing our bipartisan work to provide the best possible care to our nation's bravest in the months to come. I urge the Senate to take up this funding measure as soon as possible."

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill expands access to and strengthens the quality of veterans' health care for the 5.8 million patients, including 333,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. It accomplishes this in a number of important ways.

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Increasing enrollment in VA medical care for veterans making as little as \$28,430 (Priority 8) by 10 percent. The Bush Administration stopped enrolling these veterans right before the Iraq War;

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Strengthening mental health care for the growing number of veterans with PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury -- providing \$3.8 billion;

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Providing veterans with advanced prosthetics -- investing \$116 million more than the President - helping those who have lost limbs rebuild their lives;

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Bolstering maintenance at VA medical facilities to prevent a Walter Reed-like tragedy - a \$300 million increase over the President;

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Increasing gas mileage reimbursement from 28.5 to 41.5 cents per mile for veterans traveling to get health care to help those in rural areas; and

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Expanding
access to fee-based care for veterans in areas where the VA does not offer
services.

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