

Congress Nears Deal on Omnibus Funding Measure: Contains Substantial Increase in Funding for Veterans

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WASHINGTON,

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"I am pleased that the Appropriations Committee recognized the importance of this project to Maine," said Michaud. "While the epidemic of meth continues to spread throughout our country, it is important that our state has the resources available to tackle it in a proactive way. In parts of Maine, meth abuse and availability is on the rise. This new funding comes at a crucial time."

As the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs' Subcommittee on Health, Michaud led the charge to significantly increase funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The bill funds the VA at \$43.1 billion, \$6.6 billion above 2007 and \$3.7 billion over the President's request for veterans' medical care, claims processing, and facility improvements.

"This historic funding level for the VA is welcome news," said Michaud. "It will help address the needs of all of our veterans, including the current challenges of delivering adequate mental health care and treating traumatic brain injury. Generations of

veterans both past and present deserve the same access and high quality care that we have promised. This bill will help us do more for all of them."

"In addition to the increased funding, the bill also directs the VA to move forward in developing community based outpatient clinics in a number of communities throughout the country, including Dover-Foxcroft, Houlton, and Lewiston-Auburn. Establishing these clinics will further improve access to high quality health care to Maine veterans," said Michaud.

The bill also includes increased funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance: \$2.6 billion, \$409 million above 2007 and rejecting the President's \$379 million cut.

"This funding will help more Mainers stay warm," said Michaud. "I will continue to push for more funding so that no Mainer has to go without needed assistance."

The Omnibus Appropriations bill rolled a number of bills into one. Below are some highlights of funding priorities for Maine that are contained in the bill:

AGRICULTURE

\$185,000 for Lowbush Blueberry Research, ME

\$316,000 for Northeast
Center for Invasive
Plants, CT, ME, VT

\$300,000 for Potato Integrated Pest Management - Late Blight, ME

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

\$282,000 for the University of Southern Maine, Lewiston-Auburn College,
The Learning Works project

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

\$423,000 for Maine State
Police Methamphetamine Project

\$376,000 for Understanding
Abrupt Global Climate Change, for researchers to address relevant issues
related to the range, magnitude, forcing and predictability of abrupt climate
change events, University
of Maine - Orono.

\$188,000 for the
Lobster Institute CORE Initiative

\$376,000 for the
Groundline Exchange Program, to coordinate a Maine exchange program providing financial
assistance to lobstermen by enabling them to purchase "whale-safe" rope in
exchange for their existing groundline, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve

INTERIOR:

\$500,000 for Resource Management - Atlantic Salmon - Penobscot River

\$600,000 for Land Acquisition - Acadia National Park

\$3.3 million Lower
Penobscot Forest

\$550,000 White
Mountain National Forest, Maine
Access, Haystack Notch Trailhead

\$300,000 The City of Presque Isle for wastewater treatment
plant relocation project

\$300,000 The City of Ellsworth for wastewater treatment
plant relocation project

LABOR, HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION:

\$195,000 Central Maine Community College,
Auburn, ME
for a training program in precision metalworking and machine tooling technology

\$243,000 Charles A Dean Memorial Hospital,
Greenville, ME for facilities and equipment

\$97,000 Fish River Rural Health, Eagle Lake, ME
for construction, renovation and equipment

\$143,000 Maine Coast Memorial
Hospital, Ellsworth, ME
for construction, renovation, and equipment

\$185,000 Maine Primary Care Association, Augusta, ME
for health information system in community health centers across the state

\$104,000 Northern Maine Community College,
Presque Isle, ME for construction, renovation, and
equipment

\$134,000 Saint Croix
Regional Family
Health Centers,
Princeton, ME for construction, renovation, and
equipment

\$158,000 St. Mary's Medical
Center, Lewiston, ME
for equipment

\$97,000 Maine Lighthouse Corporation Bar Harbor, ME for
Therapeutic Community for Substance Abuse Treatment

\$143,000 University
of Maine, Orono, ME to
maintain healthy interscholastic youth sports program

\$104,000 Central Maine Community College,
Auburn, ME
for nursing education expansion and outreach

\$97,000 Waldo County Preschool and Family Services Belfast,
ME for Maine
early language and literacy initiative

\$97,000 Maine Alliance for Arts Education, Augusta, ME for
the complete education for rural students project

TRANSPORTATION:

\$1,875,000 Swan's Island Ferry Facilities, ME

\$375,000 Reconstruction of Bangor Street, ME

\$375,000 I-295, Exit 4 Improvement Project, ME

\$500,000 Arnold Bridge Improvement, Willimantic, ME

\$300,000 Statewide Buses and Bus Facilities, ME

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT:

\$250,000 for the Town of Millinocket
for planning and design of the Penobscot

Indian Cultural
Center

\$150,000 for the Penobscot Theatre Company in Bangor, ME
to renovate the Bangor Opera House

\$262,500 for the City of Brewer,
Maine for
redevelopment project on the site of the former Eastern Fine Paper mill

\$262,500 for the City of Bangor, Maine to support ongoing
efforts to redevelop the Bangor Waterfront

ENERGY AND WATER:

\$1 million for the University
of Maine in Orono, ME
for research in integrated forest products refinery technology

\$900,000 Greenville Steam Efficiency project in Greenville, ME

\$125,000 Searsport Harbor, Maine

\$950,000 Narraguagus River, ME

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