

The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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February 7, 2012

Honorable Jeff Miller, Chair
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

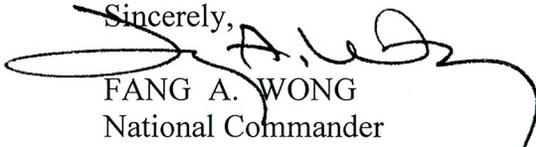
On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion, I express our support for H. R. 3895, the *Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012*. This bill amends the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to clarify that all veterans programs are exempt from sequestration.

The American Legion is very concerned about potential funding cuts should sequestration be imposed in the Fiscal Year 2013 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) budget. It is our understanding that due to a conflict in the law, the VA budget may be subject to a 2% cut in discretionary medical care. The American Legion is opposed to any such cuts to these programs.

The American Legion believes the VA budget is already insufficient. Currently, of the approximately 24 million veterans in this country, only about 7.5 million are enrolled in the VA healthcare system. For many enrolled veterans the VA healthcare system is their medical provider of choice; for others it is the only provider they have. Many non-enrolled veterans would like to utilize the VA system for their healthcare needs, but are unable to enroll due to current budget constraints. America's veterans have earned their healthcare benefits by virtue of their honorable service to country.

We thank you for your efforts to ensure the existing funding for veterans healthcare is not adversely affected. America's enrolled veterans should not lose their earned benefits and their healthcare be sacrificed to solve the nation's budget problems. Thank you for your continued support for American's veterans, service members, and their families.

Sincerely,



FANG A. WONG
National Commander