



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Jeff Miller, Chairman, 335 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 31, 2012

CONTACT: Amy Mitchell (202) 225-3527

Congress Sends Comprehensive Veterans Bill to President

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the House of Representatives unanimously passed the [Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012](#) (H.R. 1627). The bill, now headed to the President for signature into law, will bring immediate VA healthcare to Camp Lejeune veterans and their families who have been diagnosed with a disease related to the water contamination that occurred at the base between 1957 and 1987. In addition, H.R. 1627 increases VA accountability to veterans by streamlining the disability claims process, ensuring transparency in VA funding, protecting veterans from sexual assault, and transforming how VA does business in the 21st century.

“This legislation is a culmination of more than a year’s worth of work on behalf of America’s veterans, and an example of what lawmakers can accomplish working together in a bipartisan manner,” stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. “The Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 will make an immediate impact in the lives of veterans, their families, and survivors by providing the care and support they have earned through their service to our nation.”

“I am pleased that the House of Representatives came together in a bipartisan manner to support H.R. 1627, which included legislation I authored to help streamline the claims process for our veterans,” stated Rep. Jon Runyan, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. “Our veterans have sacrificed so much and it is an outrage that many have to wait months for benefits claims to be processed. The backlog at VA must be addressed and fixed, and I believe the passage of this bill is an important first step. I look forward to continuing my work to ensure the backlog is eliminated.”

“Every year, VA spends millions of dollars on conferences and, while there is a need for such meetings, Congress must be able to provide proper oversight of this spending. I’m proud that this legislation will require VA to report on conferences costing \$20,000 or more,” stated Rep. Marlin Stutzman, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. “Transparency and accountability are essential as VA conducts its mission to serve our veterans.”

“Caring for our nation’s veterans and their families is one of our most crucial duties as legislators. I am especially pleased that the Veterans Sexual Assault Prevention and Health Care Enhancement Act is part of this legislation and will be sent to the President for consideration,” stated Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle, Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Health. “Negligence related to sexual assault within the VA cannot be tolerated. This legislation will correct a fundamental weakness in VA’s system by setting in place the procedures and accountability measures necessary to ensure the protection of veterans and staff.”

“America’s veterans deserve the very best of the benefits and care they have earned, and VA consistently falls short when it comes to addressing the needs of our heroes. More than half of disability claims have been pending for more than 125 days and the backlog has surged to more than 900,000 claims,” stated Rep. Bill Johnson, Chairman of Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations. “This is completely unacceptable. The Modernizing Notice to Claimants Act,

included in H.R. 1627, which I introduced, will modernize how VA communicates with claimants while holding VA's feet to the fire in making sure America's veterans are being properly served by VA."

To learn more about the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012, click [here](#).

For more news from the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, please visit:

Veterans.House.Gov

Find us on Facebook at: Facebook.com/HouseVetsAffairs or follow us on Twitter at:

[@HouseVetAffairs](https://Twitter.com/@HouseVetAffairs)

###