



COMMITTEE *on* APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIRMAN PATRICK LEAHY

For Immediate Release:

March 9, 2022

Contact:

Jay Tilton :

(202) 224-2667

SUMMARY

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES FISCAL YEAR 2022 APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Washington, D.C. –The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies bill for fiscal year 2022, provides the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and related agencies \$112.65 billion in non-defense discretionary funding, as well as \$157 billion in mandatory funding, to fulfill our obligations to the nation’s veterans. This is \$7.9 billion above fiscal year 2021 levels. The bill further provides advance appropriations for fiscal year 2023, including \$111.3 billion for veterans medical care and \$161 billion for veterans benefits. The bill also includes \$14.90 billion in defense spending for military construction this year, which is \$6.8 billion over fiscal year 2021.

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Chair of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Subcommittee, said:

“This bill provides full funding to VA to continue caring for our nation’s veterans, including a historic investment into medical research and funding for additional staff to address claims related to toxic exposures. It also doubles the amount of funding for military construction from last year, which builds on several years of sustained investment above the budget request by Congress in critical infrastructure. This includes funding for nearly 300 construction projects that make critical investments in energy resilience, laboratory modernization, and quality of life facilities, like child development centers and troop barracks.”

Key Areas of Funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Medical Care

This bill supports \$97.5 billion for VA medical care in fiscal year 2022, a \$7.5 billion or 8.7 percent increase over fiscal year 2021, to provide essential health services for 9.2 million veterans, including deferred care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill funds critical priorities including:

- Rural Health – \$327 million, \$27 million more than fiscal year 2021 to support improved access to care, including expanded access to transportation and telehealth.
- Caregivers -- \$1.4 billion, \$178 million more than fiscal year 2021, to help VA quickly expand this critical program.

- Women’s Health – \$840 million, \$101 million more than fiscal year 2021, for gender-specific healthcare services, as well as initiatives to enhance women veterans’ healthcare, and improvements to healthcare facilities.
- Veteran Homelessness Prevention – \$2.2 billion, \$246 million more than in fiscal year 2021, to support critical services and housing assistance for veterans and their families experiencing housing insecurity, many as a result of the pandemic.
- Mental Health – \$13.2 billion, \$2.9 billion more than in fiscal year 2021. This includes \$598 million for suicide prevention outreach.

Benefits Administration

The bill provides \$3.5 billion, a \$274 million or 8.6 percent increase over fiscal year 2021, to provide disability compensation benefits to nearly 6 million veterans and their survivors. These funds will support VA to decrease the claims backlog, as well as address the anticipated increase in claims due to new laws related to toxic exposure.

Medical and Prosthetics Research

The bill makes a historic level of investment into research, providing \$882 million for this fiscal year, \$67 million more than fiscal year 2021. This supports ongoing and new research in areas such as toxic exposures, traumatic brain injury, and precision oncology.

Infrastructure

The bill strengthens VA’s infrastructure by including \$1.6 billion, \$295 million more than fiscal year 2021, for major construction and \$553 million, \$163 million more than in fiscal year 2021, for minor construction.

Information Technology

The bill provides \$5.5 billion in funding for information technology systems, in addition to \$2.5 billion to continue the Department’s work to roll out the electronic health record to facilities across the country.

Key Areas of Military Construction funding:

Critical Overseas Infrastructure

Recognizing the importance of infrastructure in a sustained and capable U.S. and allied military presence in Europe, particularly in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the bill includes \$415 million for seven projects that support the European Deterrence Initiative. The bill also provides \$216 million for the NATO Security Investment Program, which is \$10 million more than the budget request. This fully funds the U.S. cost share for NATO military construction projects.

Additionally, to build on efforts in recent years to prioritize funding to support our posture in the Pacific, the bill includes \$474 million for projects in the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) theater that support the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, as well as \$58.6 million more than the budget request for INDOPACOM planning and design.

Climate and Energy Resilience

The increased frequency, variability, and intensity of natural disasters come at a cost to taxpayers and degrade Department of Defense (DOD) missions by damaging or destroying bases across the country. Recognizing that reality, the bill provides \$120 million in funding for Military Installation Resilience, particularly to enable DOD to address key infrastructure needs to prepare for and address current and future risks from climate change. It also includes \$469 million for the Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program (ERCIP), which is \$183 million more than the request, and \$10 million of which is for planning and design to develop infrastructure requirements associated with DOD's transition to an electric vehicle fleet. ERCIP is the primary program responsible for addressing critical energy and water resilience projects on installations.

Quality of Life Facilities

Recognizing the importance of providing new infrastructure to improve quality of life for service members and their families, the bill fully funds all barracks and child development centers (CDC) requested, as well as the family housing accounts. It also provides funding for several unfunded projects identified by the services. In total, it includes nearly \$700 million for twelve troop housing projects and \$224 million for seven child development centers, including \$33 million in planning and design for future CDC construction.

PFOS/PFOA

Within the Base Closure Account, the bill includes \$150 million more than the request to assist the services in addressing PFOS/PFOA hazards associated with perfluorinated chemicals on installations that have been previously closed or realigned. This will provide additional funds for the services to continue sampling and monitoring, treatment, remediation, and other mitigation efforts currently underway.

Key Areas of Funding for Critical Related Agencies

Arlington National Cemetery

This bill reflects Congress' unwavering support for Arlington National Cemetery, and an investment in its future as an active cemetery. In addition to providing \$87 million for operations costs, it also includes \$141 million for the Southern Expansion construction project.

American Battle Monuments Commission

To support unfunded operations and facilities maintenance priorities, the bill provides a total of \$87.5 million, which is \$2.7 million more than the request.

Armed Forces Retirement Home

The bill provides a total of \$77 million, which is \$1.7 million more than the request for its most pressing infrastructure projects at the Washington D.C. and Gulfport, Mississippi locations.

#####