

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2018

Omnibus Agreement Summary

Highlights of the FY2018 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill:

The bill includes \$92.7 billion in FY2018 discretionary funding, \$9.9 billion above the FY2017 level. This funding includes \$81.5 billion, a \$7.1 billion increase over FY2017, for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs programs. The bill also fulfills mandatory funding requirements, including veteran disability compensation programs for 4.6 million veterans.

Military construction funding is increased by \$2.7 billion over the FY2017 enacted level, with \$10.1 billion provided to support family housing, construction of important national defense facilities, and military hospitals. It also includes \$750 million for critical facility investments in support of Overseas Contingency Operations.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

Military Construction – \$10.1 billion to fund 201 military construction projects, which is \$2.4 billion above the FY2017 level and \$308 million above the budget request. The agreement also includes \$750 million for 28 Overseas Contingency Operations projects. This includes funds for large and small construction and renovation projects on military bases within the United States and around the globe. The agreement also includes:

- **European Reassurance Initiative** – \$308 million to fund construction projects in support of U.S. allies through the European Reassurance Initiative.
- **Overseas Contingency Operations** – \$442 million for construction projects in direct support of military operations in the Middle East.
- **Military Family Housing** – \$1.4 billion for construction, operation and maintenance of military family housing, which is \$133 million above the FY2017 level. The bill includes construction funding for seven (7) family housing projects.
- **Military Medical Facilities** – \$556 million for construction or alteration of military medical facilities. This funding will allow for continued support and care for 9.8 million eligible beneficiaries, including wounded U.S. troops abroad.
- **Department of Defense Education Facilities** – \$249 million for essential safety improvements and infrastructure work at four overseas military schools.
- **Guard and Reserve** – \$645 million to support the construction needs of National Guard and Reserve forces.
- **NATO Security Investment Program** – \$178 million to provide infrastructure for training, deterrence, and the NATO Alliance's response to challenges posed by Russia and threats from the Middle East and North Africa.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Affairs (VA) – The legislation includes a record level of \$81.5 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, an increase of \$7.1 billion above the FY2017 level. These resources will provide the healthcare, benefits and memorial services earned by U.S. servicemembers and veterans.

The measure makes an additional \$3.2 billion in medical care funding available in FY2018 to improve access to care, and to support additional health care services including hepatitis C treatments, opioid addiction treatments, veterans' caregiver services, and homeless veterans' assistance. These funds are addition to FY2018 medical care advance funding provided last year.

- **VA Medical Care** – \$70.3 billion to support medical treatment and healthcare for approximately 9.2 million enrolled patients in FY2018. The bill includes: \$5.5 billion to care for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans; \$840 million for the essential Caregivers Program; \$722 million for important medical and prosthetic research; \$525 million for health care specifically for women veterans; \$316 million for traumatic brain injury treatment; and \$270 million for rural health initiatives.
- **Disability Claims Processing** – \$38 million for the paperless claims processing system, \$115 million for digital scanning of health records, and \$27 million for centralized mail. To prompt greater national and regional progress in reducing VA claims backlogs, the bill maintains strict reporting requirements.
- **Construction** – \$855 million for major and minor construction associated with VA hospital replacement, correction of seismic deficiencies, scores of projects to improve access to VA health care, and the VA's National Cemeteries. The bill also includes an additional \$595 million in construction grants for State Extended Care Facilities.
- **VA Mandatory Funding** – The bill fulfills mandatory funding requirements such as: veteran disability compensation programs for 4.6 million veterans and 420,000 survivors; education benefits for nearly one million veterans; guaranteed home loans for 519,000 veterans; and vocational rehabilitation and employment training for more than 145,000 veterans.
- **Advance Appropriations** – \$70.7 billion in FY2019 advance discretionary funding for veteran health care, and \$107.7 billion in FY2019 advance mandatory funding for veterans benefits.
- **Electronic Health Record** – \$782 million in FY2019 to fund the Department's new electronic health record contract. The bill creates a new account to fund this initiative and monitor the spending associated with the new Cerner contract.
- **Opioid Treatment Funding** – \$385.8 million, a \$12.5 million increase, to fund opioid treatment and prevention throughout VA. This includes funding associated with CARA implementation.

Related Agencies – The legislation also includes \$424.7 million in funding for:

- **American Battle Monuments Commission** – \$79.0 million
- **U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims** – \$33.6 million
- **Arlington National Cemetery** – \$247.8 million, including \$167 million to begin to fund the Cemetery's Southern Expansion Project
- **Armed Forces Retirement Home** – \$64.3 million

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