

RESOLUTION NO. 223

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO MAKE VA HEALTH CARE FUNDING MANDATORY

WHEREAS, the funding for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care under the Federal budget is a discretionary program, meaning that it is within the discretion of Congress to determine how much money it will allocate each year for veterans' medical care; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, section 1710(a), provides that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs "shall" furnish hospital care and medical services, but only to the extent Congress has provided money to cover the costs of the care; and

WHEREAS, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) firmly believes that service-connected disabled veterans have earned the right to VA medical care through their extraordinary sacrifices and service to this Nation; and

WHEREAS, the DAV, along with the other *Independent Budget Organizations*, has fought for sufficient funding for VA health care and a budget that is reflective of the rising cost of health care and increasing need for medical services; and

WHEREAS, despite our continued efforts, the cumulative effects of insufficient health care funding have now resulted in the rationing of health care; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that it has now reached capacity at many of its health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA is unable to provide timely access to quality health care to many of our Nation's most severely disabled service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is disingenuous for our government to promise health care to veterans but then make it unattainable because of inadequate funding; and

WHEREAS, making veterans' health care funding mandatory would ensure the government meets its obligation to provide health care to service-connected disabled veterans and ensure all veterans eligible for care in the VA health care system have access to timely quality health care; and

WHEREAS, making veterans' health care funding mandatory would eliminate the year-to-year uncertainties about funding levels that have prevented VA from being able to adequately plan for and meet the constantly growing number of veterans seeking treatment; and

WHEREAS, by including all veterans currently eligible and enrolled for care in the mandatory health care funding proposal, we protect the overall viability of the system

and the specialized programs VA has developed to improve the health and well-being of our nation's service-connected disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Dallas, Texas, August 10-14, 2002, supports legislation to make VA health care funding mandatory thereby guaranteeing Congress provide sufficient resources to cover the expenses of the veterans' health care program.

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