



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 19, 2012 CONTACT: Amy Mitchell (202) 225-3527

House Ensures Veterans Programs Won't Expire

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the House of Representatives passed two veterans bills to ensure vital VA programs don't expire at the end of the fiscal year and to protect veterans from fraud within VA. The VA Major Construction Authorization and Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2012 (H.R. 6375, as amended) and the Veterans Fiduciary Reform and Honoring Noble Service Act (H.R. 5948, as amended) passed by voice vote.

H.R. 6375, as amended, co-sponsored by Rep. Michael Michaud, provides funding authority for VA to complete construction at medical facilities around the country. The legislation also extends for one year certain long-standing existing authorities important to providing services to our veterans that would otherwise expire this year, including services for veterans who are seriously mentally ill or homeless.

"I was pleased to strongly support the bipartisan efforts to extend certain veterans programs and authorize the construction of VA medical facilities," said Rep. Michaud, ranking member of the Committee's Subcommittee on Health. "The bill's provisions to authorize programs to help our most vulnerable veterans—the seriously mentally ill and homeless—are particularly key to providing our veterans the support and benefits they deserve. Although the 12 percent reduction in the number of homeless veterans in 2011 was an important step in the right direction it is critical that Congress continue to support efforts to reduce veteran homelessness."

[The Veterans Fiduciary Reform and Honoring Noble Service Act](#) (H.R. 5948), introduced by Rep. Bill Johnson, puts in place protections for veterans under VA's Fiduciary Program, a program that the Committee has been found to be fraught with fraud.

If signed into law, the bill will mandate that all VA fiduciaries submit to a background and credit check, and will institute an appeals process to ensure that veterans and their families have recourse should they lose confidence in a VA-appointed fiduciary.

"VA's Fiduciary Program has been flawed for a long time, and these reforms will protect veterans whose finances are being managed by VA. I am very proud of this legislation," stated Rep. Johnson. "Veterans will no longer be subject to a broken system that allows dishonest people to oversee their financial matters. Under this bill, veterans in need of the fiduciary program can rest assured that their future is in the hands of trustworthy individuals."

"Both of the bills that came from our Committee and passed the House today further demonstrate not only the Congress's commitment to America's veterans, but that we are able to do so in a bipartisan manner," said Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "Despite the tough fiscal climate, we remain committed to moving forward with legislation that greatly aids America's veterans."

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