



November 10, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the millions of veterans our organizations represent, we write to express serious concerns about reports that the Senate is considering approving a full-year continuing resolution to fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year 2022, which would have significant negative consequences for veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. Therefore, we are asking that you work together to ensure that veterans programs, benefits and medical services receive the full level of funding for fiscal year 2022 that was approved with strong bipartisan support (25 to 5) by the Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

As you know, Congress approved and the President signed a short-term continuing resolution (Public Law 117-43) on September 30th to fund the federal government through December 3, 2021, extending funding at the levels previously enacted in fiscal year 2021 appropriations legislation. Funding for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care and benefit payments for fiscal year 2022 was previously approved in December 2020 as advance appropriations in Division J (Military Construction and Veterans Affairs) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116-260. However, the advance appropriations process only works properly if funding levels are adjusted to address increased demand for benefits and services as part of the following year's regular appropriations process, as is necessary for fiscal year 2022. Further, if Congress passes a full-year continuing resolution, all other programs, services and benefits would remain funded at fiscal year 2021 levels, which would fall short of the anticipated needs.

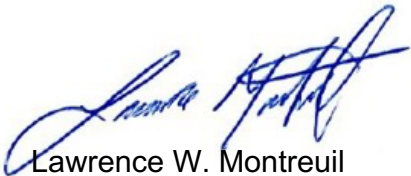
For example, a full-year continuing resolution could result in an estimated \$7 billion shortfall in funding for mandatory compensation and pension benefits, in large part due to an increased number of benefit claims resulting from congressional approval of new diseases related to Agent Orange exposure for Vietnam veterans.

In addition, the time it takes to process these and other claims for benefits would be significantly increased without the \$300 million increase for the Veterans Benefits Administration approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Similarly, reductions from the Committee-approved levels for the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the National Cemetery Administration would negatively impact veterans and their survivors seeking their services and benefits.

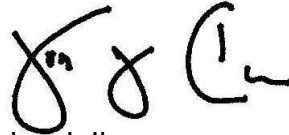
Enacting a full-year continuing resolution would also negatively hamper veterans' ability to receive timely medical care absent the \$3.3 billion increase for Veterans Medical Community Care approved by the Senate Committee. VA's critical Medical and Prosthetic Research programs would be cut by \$67 million and funding to support VA's health care infrastructure would be cut \$450 million below the levels approved by the Committee if Congress passes a full-year continuing resolution.

As leaders of the Senate, we call on you to reject consideration of a full-year continuing resolution that would reduce veterans' funding below what has already been approved in an overwhelming bipartisan vote of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Instead, we ask that you use your influence to ensure that the Senate completes consideration of the fiscal year 2022 appropriations so that veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors have timely access to all the benefits, services and medical care they have earned.

Respectfully,



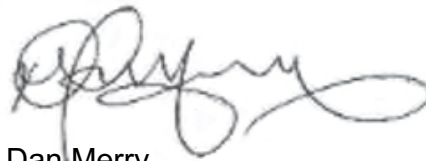
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Patrick Murray, Director
National Legislative Service
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Brian Dempsey
Government Affairs Director
Wounded Warrior Project

Cc. The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman