

## **Increase in veterans funding as well as advance appropos for VA healthcare accounts passed the House**

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### **House Passes Boost in Veterans' Spending**

The House on Friday passed a \$133.7 billion spending bill that boosts funding for veterans benefits in fiscal 2010 and includes some advance funding for fiscal 2011.

The measure, which passed 415-3, also contains funding for military construction projects and other activities of the Veterans Affairs Department. About \$77.9 billion of the funding is discretionary spending appropriated by Congress; the rest is mandatory funding for veterans' disability benefits and other entitlements.

"With passage of this fiscal year 2010 bill, the Congress will have increased veterans health care and benefits funding by 58 percent in the past two and a half years. This is an unprecedented increase in Congress' commitment to veterans, and in my book, our veterans have earned every dime of this funding," said Chet Edwards, D-Texas, the chairman of the Military Construction-Veterans' Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee.

Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., said that he continues "to be concerned about the ability of the [department] to absorb large funding increases provided in this bill. It is absolutely our job to make sure, not just that we raise the funding levels but that the money is well spent, spent in a timely manner, it's effectively spent and there's accountability throughout the entire process."

The Senate Appropriations Committee finished work on its \$133.9 billion companion bill July 7. The measure has yet to see action on the Senate floor.