

## **President's Budget Heeds The American Legion's Funding Recommendations**

WASHINGTON (May 11, 2009) – The leader of the nation's largest veterans organization said he is "very pleased" with the president's detailed budget request for \$113 billion in FY 2010.

"The budget's dramatically increased funding level for the Department of Veterans Affairs will allow the Secretary to take on many challenges he's facing currently," said National Commander David K. Rehbein. "The budget provisions expanding health care eligibility for veterans will allow more of them timely access to the world's best health care delivery system," he continued. "The American Legion believes no veteran should ever be denied access to quality health care."

Other challenges facing the veteran care community include combating homelessness, meeting the unique needs of women veterans, expanding care to veterans in rural areas, and enhancing outreach to and services for veterans suffering mental health issues. Addressing these, Cmdr. Rehbein said, "There needs to be a concentrated effort to make sure this nation does not fail any veteran. The successful transition from active-duty military service to the civilian workforce is major concern for The American Legion, especially for a nation at war."

"Many of these young men and women have seen the horrors of war first-hand. For some the physical scars are permanent and we, as a nation, must help make these warriors as whole as possible," Rehbein said. "However, it is often the need to help heal the invisible wounds like post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury that present the greatest challenge."

"The President and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki have put together a fine, practical budget that will allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue serving America's veterans and their families as they deserve," Rehbein observed. "Promises made to those placed in harm's way must be promises kept."

Last September, National Commander Rehbein addressed the funding needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs in FY 2010 before a joint session of the Veterans' Affairs Committees. Among other areas addressed in that hearing included the timely enactment of the new Post 9-11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, improvements in the claims adjudication process for disability claims, and advance appropriations for VA medical care.