

VFW Statement on Budget Agreement

The following statement is by William A. Thien, the national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars

Oct 17, 2013

“The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States appreciates the compromise and is pleased the government has reopened, but the short-term funding package brings little assurance to America’s veteran and military communities that what just ended won’t happen again in three months.

“The VFW once again calls on Congress to prepare and pass a budget for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense that is long-term, forward focused, and designed to properly care for those who return home wounded, ill or injured, as well as to meet and defeat all current and future threats to our nation.

“VA healthcare is protected under advance appropriations, but as more than 5 million benefit recipients just painfully learned, the authorization to pay their disability and survivor benefits or college tuitions is not. Therefore, the VFW fully supports the passage of H.R. 813, the ‘Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013,’ which would provide one-year advance appropriations for all VA accounts. In addition, how sequestration will affect the VA is still unknown, therefore, the VFW again urges Congress to end sequestration.

“At the Pentagon, the short-term budget enables DOD to tread water, but the mandatory sequester continues to impact readiness across all the services. Planes are grounded, ships are in port, and our ground troops aren’t training. That is not how you keep a finely tuned, combat-hardened force ready to accomplish worldwide commitments that continue to grow in demand. Requiring the military to do more with less will threaten the viability of an all-volunteer force that has served America extremely well for four decades—and that, in turn, directly impacts national security.

“Our nation’s 22 million veterans, 2.3 million service members and all their families have risked everything for this country. We demand that same commitment from our elected leaders in Washington.”

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Update: VA Benefits Will be Paid. Now that appropriations have been enacted to reopen the federal government, the Department of Veterans Affairs is informing everyone that benefits payments to 5 million disabled veterans, survivors, families and student-veterans will be paid as scheduled on November 1.