

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND
RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2017

APRIL 15, 2016.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. DENT, from the Committee on Appropriations,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

MINORITY AND ADDITIONAL VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 4974]

The Committee on Appropriations submits the following report in
explanation of the accompanying bill making appropriations for
military construction, the Department of Affairs, and related agen-
cies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other
purposes.

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PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to support our military and their families and provide the benefits and medical care that our veterans have earned for their service to our Nation. This is accomplished through the programs funded in the bill, which provide the facilities and infrastructure needed to house, train, and equip our military personnel to defend this Nation, both in the United States and abroad; provide the housing and military community infrastructure that supports a good quality of life for them and their families; and allow the military to maintain an efficient and effective base structure. The bill also funds programs to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits and medical care that they have earned as a result of the sacrifices they have made in their service to our country. Finally, the bill funds four related agencies that provide support to our Nation’s heroes: the American Battle Monuments Commission, Cemeterial Expenses, Army (including Arlington National Cemetery), the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends \$184,175,481,000 in budget authority for the fiscal year 2017 programs and activities funded in the bill. The fiscal year 2017 recommendation is an increase of \$13,050,419,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$1,277,405,000 below the President’s request. Of the increase over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level, \$11,276,419,000 is in mandatory programs. Included in the total budget authority is \$102,532,481,000 in mandatory budget authority and \$81,643,000,000 in discretionary budget authority.

The Committee recommendation highlights the continued commitment to our servicemembers and their families and to our veterans. In discretionary budget authority, the bill is 2.2 percent over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The bill includes a slight de-

crease in military construction, which is 3.7 percent below the fiscal year 2016 level, and an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs budget, which is 3.0 percent over the fiscal year 2016 level. While the Committee recommendation continues essential support for servicemembers and veterans, it does not provide funds for projects or activities that lacked sufficient justification or were less mission-critical. Where it was prudent, the Committee recommendation rescinds prior year funding that is no longer needed for the purpose for which it was appropriated while leaving sufficient resources to close out contracts.

The programs funded in the bill for the Department of Defense address the priorities of the Department's Agencies and the Services for numerous facility challenges that they face. The funds provided support new construction, family housing, continued cleanup of military bases closed during previous Base Realignment and Closure rounds, resource Combatant Commanders requirements where appropriate, and ensure that our military personnel and their families' quality of life is preserved.

The total recommended funding level for military construction and family housing, including base and Overseas Contingency Operations funding is \$7,866,000,000, which is \$305,000,000 below the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$249,495,000 above the budget request. The recommendation includes full funding for Family Housing, funding for necessary construction on our bases, including barracks, health facilities and schools, and support for critical overseas investments, including the European Reassurance Initiative.

The total funding level for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Veterans Affairs is \$176,068,336,000, an increase of \$13,397,331,000 over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Of the total, \$102,532,481,000 is provided for mandatory benefit programs and \$73,535,855,000 is allocated to discretionary programs such as medical care, claims processing, and construction. In this bill, discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs is recommended at 3.0 percent over the fiscal year 2016 level. For fiscal year 2017, \$63,271,000,000 for medical care has been appropriated in advance, and the recommendation includes an additional \$850,000,000 in newly identified needs for VA, focusing on hepatitis C treatment, homelessness, long-term care, and caregiver stipends. The recommendation fully funds the request for the administrative costs of Veterans Benefits Administration, including funding for paperless claims, centralized mail, and additional staff. The bill also provides the full request of \$156,096,000 for the Board of Veterans Appeals, a \$46,212,000 increase, to target the growing caseload of appeals of initial benefits decisions. In addition, the Committee recommendation includes \$66,385,032,000 in advance appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for the four health care accounts of the Department and \$103,935,996,000 in advance appropriations for mandatory benefits programs for fiscal year 2018.

The following table compares amounts recommended in the bill to the President's request and amounts appropriated in fiscal year 2016:

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE I - DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE					
Military Construction, Army.....	663,245	503,459	503,459	-159,786	---
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps.....	1,669,239	1,027,763	1,021,580	-647,659	-6,183
Military Construction, Air Force.....	1,389,185	1,481,058	1,398,758	+9,573	-82,300
Military Construction, Defense-Wide.....	2,242,867	2,056,091	2,024,643	-218,224	-31,448
Total, Active components.....	5,964,536	5,068,371	4,948,440	-1,016,096	-119,931
Military Construction, Army National Guard.....	197,237	232,930	232,930	+35,693	---
Military Construction, Air National Guard.....	138,738	143,957	143,957	+5,219	---
Military Construction, Army Reserve.....	113,595	68,230	68,230	-45,365	---
Military Construction, Navy Reserve.....	36,078	38,597	38,597	+2,519	---
Military Construction, Air Force Reserve.....	65,021	188,950	188,950	+123,929	---
Total, Reserve components.....	550,669	672,664	672,664	+121,995	---
Total, Military Construction.....	6,515,205	5,741,035	5,621,104	-894,101	-119,931
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program.....	135,000	177,932	177,932	+42,932	---
Family Housing Construction, Army.....	108,695	200,735	200,735	+92,040	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Army.....	375,611	325,995	325,995	-49,616	---
Family Housing Construction, Navy and Marine Corps.....	16,541	94,011	94,011	+77,470	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps.....	353,036	300,915	300,915	-52,121	---
Family Housing Construction, Air Force.....	160,488	61,352	61,352	-99,146	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Air Force...	331,232	274,429	274,429	-56,803	---
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide	58,668	59,157	59,157	+489	---
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund.....	---	3,258	3,258	+3,258	---
Total, Family Housing.....	1,404,281	1,319,852	1,319,852	-84,429	---
Chemical demilitarization construction, Defense-Wide...	---	---	---	---	---
Department of Defense Base Closure Account.....	266,334	205,237	230,237	-36,097	+25,000
ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS					
Military Construction - fiscal year 2014.....	---	---	---	---	---
Military Construction - fiscal year 2015.....	---	---	---	---	---
Military Construction, Army (Sec. 125).....	-86,420	---	-25,000	+61,420	-25,000
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 126).....	---	---	-51,848	-51,848	-51,848
Defense Access Roads (Sec. 132).....	30,000	---	---	-30,000	---
Military Construction, Air Force.....	---	---	---	---	---
Military Construction, Defense-Wide (Sec. 127).....	-134,000	---	-37,377	+96,623	-37,377
Military Construction, Army (Sec. 128).....	34,500	---	40,500	+6,000	+40,500
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 129).....	34,500	---	293,600	+259,100	+293,600
Military Construction, Army National Guard (Sec. 130).	51,300	---	67,500	+16,200	+67,500
Military Construction, Army Reserve (Sec. 131).....	34,200	---	86,500	+52,300	+86,500
NATO Security Investment Program (Sec. 135).....	---	---	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000
Military Construction, Air Force (rescission).....	-46,400	---	---	+46,400	---

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AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
42 USC 3374 (Sec. 133).....					
Military Construction, Air Force (Sec. 132).....	-105,000	---	-25,000	+80,000	-25,000
Military Construction, Air National Guard.....	21,000	---	26,000	+5,000	+26,000
Military Construction, Air Force Reserve.....	6,100	---	---	-6,100	---
	10,400	---	---	-10,400	---
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Total, Administrative Provisions.....	-149,820	---	344,875	+494,695	+344,875
Appropriations.....	(222,000)	---	(514,100)	(+292,100)	(+514,100)
Rescissions.....	(-371,820)	---	(-169,225)	(+202,595)	(-169,225)
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Total, title I, Department of Defense.....	8,171,000	7,444,056	7,694,000	-477,000	+249,944
Appropriations.....	(8,542,820)	(7,444,056)	(7,863,225)	(-679,595)	(+419,169)
Rescissions.....	(-371,820)	---	(-169,225)	(+202,595)	(-169,225)
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

TITLE II - DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Benefits Administration

Compensation and pensions:					
Advance from prior year.....	---	(86,083,128)	(86,083,128)	(+86,083,128)	---
Current year request.....	76,865,545	---	---	-76,865,545	---
	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Subtotal, current year.....	76,865,545	86,083,128	86,083,128	+9,217,583	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	86,083,128	90,119,449	90,119,449	+4,036,321	---

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AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Readjustment benefits:					
Advance from prior year.....	---	(16,340,828)	(16,340,828)	(+16,340,828)	---
Current year request.....	14,313,357	---	---	-14,313,357	---
Subtotal.....	14,313,357	16,340,828	16,340,828	+2,027,471	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	16,340,828	13,708,648	13,708,648	-2,632,180	---
Veterans insurance and indemnities:					
Advance from prior year.....	---	(91,920)	(91,920)	(+91,920)	---
Current year request.....	77,160	16,605	16,605	-60,555	---
Subtotal.....	77,160	108,525	108,525	+31,365	---
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	91,920	107,899	107,899	+15,979	---
Veterans housing benefit program fund:					
(Indefinite).....	---	---	---	---	---
(Limitation on direct loans).....	(500)	(500)	(500)	---	---
Administrative expenses.....	164,558	198,856	167,612	+3,054	-31,244
Vocational rehabilitation loans program account.....	31	36	36	+5	---
(Limitation on direct loans).....	(2,952)	(2,517)	(2,517)	(-435)	---
Administrative expenses.....	367	389	389	+22	---

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(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Native American veteran housing loan program account.....	1,134	1,163	1,163	+29	---
Total, Veterans Benefits Administration.....	193,938,028	104,153,045	104,121,801	-89,816,227	-31,244
Appropriations.....	(91,422,152)	(217,049)	(185,805)	(-91,236,347)	(-31,244)
Advance appropriations, FY 2018.....	(102,515,876)	(103,935,996)	(103,935,996)	(+1,420,120)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations.....	---	(102,515,876)	(102,515,876)	(+102,515,876)	---
Veterans Health Administration					
Medical services:					
Advance from prior year.....	(47,603,202)	(51,673,000)	(51,673,000)	(+4,069,798)	---
Current year request.....	2,369,158	1,078,993	850,000	-1,519,158	-228,993
Subtotal.....	49,972,360	52,751,993	52,523,000	+2,550,640	-228,993
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	51,673,000	44,886,554	44,886,554	-6,786,446	---
Medical community care:					
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	---	9,409,118	9,409,118	+9,409,118	---
Transfer from medical care accounts.....	---	(7,246,181)	(7,246,181)	(+7,246,181)	---
Medical support and compliance:					
Advance from prior year.....	(6,144,000)	(6,524,000)	(6,524,000)	(+380,000)	---
Current year request.....	---	---	---	---	---
Subtotal.....	6,144,000	6,524,000	6,524,000	+380,000	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	6,524,000	6,654,480	6,654,480	+130,480	---
Medical facilities:					
Advance from prior year.....	(4,915,000)	(5,074,000)	(5,074,000)	(+159,000)	---
Current year request.....	105,132	649,000	---	-105,132	-649,000
Subtotal.....	5,020,132	5,723,000	5,074,000	+53,868	-649,000
Advance appropriation, FY 2018.....	5,074,000	5,434,880	5,434,880	+360,880	---
Medical and prosthetic research.....	630,735	663,366	663,366	+32,631	---
Medical care cost recovery collections:					
Offsetting collections.....	-2,445,000	-2,637,000	-2,637,000	-192,000	---
Appropriations (indefinite).....	2,445,000	2,637,000	2,637,000	+192,000	---
Subtotal.....	---	---	---	---	---
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (transfers out).....	(-286,000)	(-274,731)	(-274,731)	(+11,269)	---
DoD-VA Joint Medical Funds (by transfer).....	(286,000)	(274,731)	(274,731)	(-11,269)	---
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (Transfer out).....	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	(-15,000)	---	---
DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (by transfer).....	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	---	---
Total, Veterans Health Administration.....	66,376,025	68,776,391	67,898,398	+1,522,373	-877,993
Appropriations.....	(3,105,025)	(2,391,359)	(1,513,366)	(-1,591,659)	(-877,993)
(By transfer).....	(301,000)	(7,535,912)	(7,535,912)	(+7,234,912)	---
Advance appropriations, FY 2018.....	(63,271,000)	(66,385,032)	(66,385,032)	(+3,114,032)	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Advances from prior year appropriations.....	(58,662,202)	(63,271,000)	(63,271,000)	(+4,608,798)	---
National Cemetery Administration					
National Cemetery Administration.....	271,220	286,193	271,220	---	-14,973
Departmental Administration					
General administration.....	336,659	417,959	336,659	---	-81,300
Board of Veterans Appeals.....	109,884	156,096	156,096	+46,212	---
General operating expenses, VBA.....	2,707,734	2,826,160	2,826,160	+118,426	---
Information technology systems.....	4,133,363	4,278,259	4,220,869	+87,506	-57,390
Office of Inspector General.....	136,766	160,106	160,106	+23,340	---
Construction, major projects.....	1,243,800	528,110	528,110	-715,690	---
Construction, minor projects.....	406,200	372,069	372,069	-34,131	---
Grants for construction of State extended care facilities.....	120,000	80,000	80,000	-40,000	---
Grants for the construction of veterans cemeteries.....	46,000	45,000	45,000	-1,000	---
Total, Departmental Administration.....	9,240,406	8,863,759	8,725,069	-515,337	-138,690
Administrative Provisions					
Section 226 (FY16)					
Medical services.....	1,400,000	---	---	-1,400,000	---
(Rescission).....	-1,400,000	---	---	+1,400,000	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Medical support and compliance.....	100,000	---	---	-100,000	---
(Rescission).....	-100,000	---	---	+100,000	---
Medical facilities.....	250,000	---	---	-250,000	---
(Rescission).....	-250,000	---	---	+250,000	---
JIF rescission (Sec. 232).....	-30,000	---	-30,000	---	-30,000
Payraise absorption rescission (Sec. 233).....	---	---	-337,382	-337,382	-337,382
Payraise absorption reduction (Sec. 234).....	---	---	-46,618	-46,618	-46,618
Total. Administrative Provisions.....	-30,000	---	-414,000	-384,000	-414,000
Total, title II.....	269,795,679	182,079,388	180,602,488	-89,193,191	-1,476,900
Appropriations.....	(105,788,803)	(11,758,360)	(10,648,842)	(-95,139,961)	(-1,109,518)
Rescissions.....	(-1,780,000)	---	(-367,382)	(+1,412,618)	(-367,382)
(By transfer).....	(301,000)	(7,535,912)	(7,535,912)	(+7,234,912)	---
Advance Appropriations, FY 2018:					
Mandatory.....	(102,515,876)	(103,935,996)	(103,935,996)	(+1,420,120)	---
Discretionary.....	(63,271,000)	(66,385,032)	(66,385,032)	(+3,114,032)	---
Advances from prior year appropriations:					
Mandatory.....	---	(102,515,876)	(102,515,876)	(+102,515,876)	---
Discretionary.....	(58,662,202)	(63,271,000)	(63,271,000)	(+4,608,798)	---
(Limitation on direct loans).....	(3,452)	(3,017)	(3,017)	(-435)	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Discretionary.....	(76,023,741)	(78,126,787)	(76,649,887)	(+626,146)	(-1,476,900)
Advances from prior year less FY 2018 advances	(-4,608,798)	(-3,114,032)	(-3,114,032)	(+1,494,766)	---
Net discretionary.....	(71,414,943)	(75,012,755)	(73,535,855)	(+2,120,912)	(-1,476,900)
Mandatory.....	(193,771,938)	(103,952,601)	(103,952,601)	(-89,819,337)	---
Advances from prior year less FY 2018 advances	(-102,515,876)	(-1,420,120)	(-1,420,120)	(+101,095,756)	---
Net mandatory.....	(91,256,062)	(102,532,481)	(102,532,481)	(+11,276,419)	---
Total mandatory and discretionary.....	162,671,005	177,545,236	176,068,336	+13,397,331	-1,476,900

TITLE III - RELATED AGENCIES

American Battle Monuments Commission					
Salaries and expenses.....	105,100	75,100	75,100	-30,000	---
Foreign currency fluctuations account.....	2,000	---	---	-2,000	---
Total, American Battle Monuments Commission.....	107,100	75,100	75,100	-32,000	---
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims					
Salaries and expenses.....	32,141	30,945	30,945	-1,196	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBLIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Department of Defense - Civil					
Cemeterial Expenses, Army					
Salaries and expenses.....	79,516	70,800	70,800	-8,716	---
Armed Forces Retirement Home - Trust Fund					
Operation and maintenance.....	43,300	63,300	41,300	-2,000	-22,000
Capital program.....	1,000	1,000	1,000	---	---
Payment from General Fund.....	20,000	---	22,000	+2,000	+22,000
Total, Armed Forces Retirement Home.....	64,300	64,300	64,300	---	---
=====					
Total, title III.....	283,057	241,145	241,145	-41,912	---
=====					
TITLE IV - OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS					
Overseas Contingency Operations					
Navy.....	---	38,409	38,409	+38,409	---
Air Force.....	---	11,440	11,440	+11,440	---
Subtotal.....	---	49,849	49,849	+49,849	---

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF NEW BUDGET (OBIGATIONAL) AUTHORITY FOR 2016
AND BUDGET REQUESTS AND AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED IN THE BILL FOR 2017
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
European Reassurance Initiative					
Army.....	---	18,900	18,900	+18,900	---
Navy.....	---	21,400	21,400	+21,400	---
Air Force.....	---	68,300	68,300	+68,300	---
Defense-wide.....	---	5,000	5,000	+5,000	---
Subtotal.....	---	113,600	113,600	+113,600	---
Counter Terrorism Support					
Air Force.....	---	9,000	8,551	+8,551	-449
Total, title IV.....	---	172,449	172,000	+172,000	-449
Grand total.....					
Appropriations.....	278,249,736	189,937,038	188,709,633	-89,540,103	-1,227,405
Rescissions.....	(114,614,680)	(19,443,561)	(18,753,212)	(-95,861,468)	(-690,349)
Advance appropriations, FY 2018.....	(-2,151,820)	---	(-536,607)	(+1,615,213)	(-536,607)
Advances from prior year appropriations.....	(165,786,876)	(170,321,028)	(170,321,028)	(+4,534,152)	---
(By transfer).....	(58,662,202)	(165,786,876)	(165,786,876)	(+107,124,674)	---
(Transfer out).....	(301,000)	(7,535,912)	(7,535,912)	(+7,234,912)	---
(Limitation on direct loans).....	(-301,000)	(-289,731)	(-289,731)	(+11,269)	---
	(3,452)	(3,017)	(3,017)	(-435)	---

MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT INITIATIVES

The Committee believes the effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars is of the highest priority. In the interest of eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in Federal programs, the Committee has and will continue to use public hearings, briefings, and information requests, and reviews by the Government Accountability Office and the Inspectors General to promote strong financial and program management, oversight and leadership at the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other agencies under the jurisdiction of this bill.

The fiscal year 2017 appropriations Act and the accompanying report address management challenges of the Federal agencies funded herein, including directives to strengthen financial and program management, eliminate redundancy, and improve implementation and oversight of initiatives that support the mission of this bill. The Committee will use every means at its disposal to reduce mismanagement that results in waste, fraud, and abuse.

Department of Defense (DOD).—In addition to the notification and reporting requirements for military construction programs contained in Title 10, United States Code, the Committee's recommendations include several provisions requiring the Department of Defense to report on various aspects of military construction programs, or to provide notification to the Committee when certain actions are taken. The Committee also retains prior approval authority for any reprogramming of funds exceeding a specific threshold.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).—With the \$176,068,336,000 provided for VA in this bill and the increase in the number of veterans seeking VA medical services, the Committee believes it is important to strengthen its tools to monitor spending as well the operating procedures of the VA workforce. The following initiatives demonstrate the Committee's oversight focus:

VA electronic health record.—The Committee continues to feel it is critical to closely track VA's development of its electronic health record. In the aftermath of the DOD and VA decision not to pursue a single integrated health record, it becomes doubly important to ensure that the two health records are designed in a way that permits interoperability between the two in order that computable data from one record can be viewed and used by clinicians with a different electronic record system. In addition, the Committee now understands that VA is reconsidering whether it should modernize its existing health record or instead purchase a commercial product. Especially with the uncertainties VA has now introduced regarding the development, timing and cost of its electronic health record, the Committee continues its practice of including language requiring VA to provide information on cost, timeline, performance benchmarks, and interoperability capacity of whichever electronic record system it ultimately chooses before release of the funding provided.

Disability and appeals claims.—The Committee bill continues the aggressive monthly reporting requirements from each specific regional office on claims processing performance and quarterly reports on remediation efforts at the poorest performing regional offices. As the backlog of initial benefits claims continues to drop, the workload for the Board of Veterans Appeals is skyrocketing. The

Committee provides the full request for the Board, \$156,096,000, which is a \$46,212,000 increase, to provide the staffing power it needs to manage appeals.

Information technology (IT).—The Committee continues to include bill language prohibiting obligation or expenditure of funds for information technology systems development, modernization and enhancement until VA submits to the Committees a certification of the amounts. The bill limits the amount of funds that can be transferred into IT to 10 percent of the total of either the source or destination account. The bill contains language which permits the reprogramming of funds among development, modernization and enhancement projects upon prior notification to, and approval by, the Committees.

Stricter control of construction funding.—In response to the egregious management of the Denver hospital construction project, the Committee includes bill language to fence funding for major construction projects over \$100,000,000 in cost until VA certifies that it has contracted with a non-VA governmental entity to design and manage the project. Several additional bill language provisions are included to enhance the Committee's capacity to conduct oversight on VA's facility construction efforts: (1) no funding greater than \$5,000,000 may be reprogrammed between construction projects unless approved by the Committees on Appropriations of both House of Congress; (2) any change to the scope of a construction project is prohibited without the approval of the Committees; and (3) VA must report any bid savings of \$5,000,000 or more on projects as soon as they are identified.

ITEM OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Construction contracting outreach.—Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) construction projects funded in this Act are, in general, executed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Naval Facilities Command, and the VA Office of Construction. Effective communication and collaboration between Federal procurement officials and the local construction industry is essential to improve opportunities for local contractors and businesses to compete for local DOD and VA construction projects. But despite the efforts of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy to increase communication between procurement officers and industry, local business owners often do not know about nor have the opportunity to compete for contracts for Federally funded construction projects. Therefore, the Secretaries of the Army and the Navy, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs are directed to ensure that their respective regional/district offices responsible for construction projects inform and engage local construction industry contractors, especially small businesses, minority-owned businesses, and women-owned businesses, about Federal procurement opportunities and the bidding process.

TITLE I

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION OVERVIEW

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level (including rescissions)	\$8,171,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	7,444,056,000
Committee recommendation in the bill (including rescissions)	7,694,000,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(477,000,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	249,944,000

Military construction accounts provide funds for new construction, construction improvements, planning and design, and host nation support. Projects funded by these accounts include facilities for operations, training, maintenance, research and development, supply, medical care, and force protection, as well as unaccompanied housing, utilities infrastructure, and land acquisition.

Reprogramming guidelines.—The following reprogramming guidelines apply for all military construction and family housing projects. A project or account (including the sub-elements of an account) which has been specifically reduced by the Congress in acting on the budget request is considered to be a Congressional interest item and as such, prior approval is required. Accordingly, no reprogramming to an item specifically reduced below the threshold by the Congress is permitted, except that the Department of Defense may seek reprogramming for appropriated increments.

The reprogramming criteria that apply to military construction projects (25 percent of the funded amount or \$2,000,000, whichever is less) continue to apply to new housing construction projects and to improvements over \$2,000,000. To provide the services the flexibility to proceed with construction contracts without disruption or delay, the costs associated with environmental hazard remediation such as asbestos removal, radon abatement, lead-based paint removal or abatement, and any other legislated environmental hazard remediation may be excluded, if such remediation requirements could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission. This exclusion applies to projects authorized in this budget year, as well as projects authorized in prior years for which construction has not been completed. Planning and design costs associated with military construction and family housing projects may also be excluded from these guidelines. In instances where prior approval to a reprogramming request for a project or account has been received from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, the adjusted amount approved becomes the new base for any future increase or decrease via below-threshold reprogramming (provided that the project or account is not a Congressional interest item as defined above).

In addition to these guidelines, the services are directed to adhere to the guidance for military construction reprogramming actions and notifications, including the pertinent statutory authorities contained in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation 7000.14–R and relevant updates and policy memoranda. The Committee further encourages the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to use a format similar to that used by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to submit reprogramming requests.

Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM).—The Department of Defense is directed to continue describing on form 1390 the backlog of FSRM requirements at installations with future construction projects. For troop housing requests, form 1391 should describe any FSRM conducted in the past two years. Likewise, future requirements for unaccompanied housing at the corresponding installation should be included. Additionally, the forms should include English equivalent measurements for projects presented in metric measurement. Rules for funding repairs of facilities under the Operation and Maintenance accounts are described below:

(1) components of the facility may be repaired by replacement. Such replacement can be up to current standards or codes;

(2) interior arrangements and restorations may be included as repair;

(3) additions, new facilities, and functional conversions must be performed as military construction projects. Such projects may be done concurrently with repair projects as long as the final conjunctively funded project is a complete and usable facility; and

(4) the appropriate service secretary shall notify the appropriate committees 21 days prior to carrying out any repair project with an estimated cost in excess of \$7,500,000. The Committee strongly encourages the services and defense agencies to indicate the plant replacement value of the facility to be repaired on each such notification.

Quarterly summary of notifications.—The Committee directs the services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (on behalf of itself and defense agencies) to continue to submit a quarterly report listing all notifications that have been submitted to the Committees during the preceding three-month period.

Work in Progress or Planned (WIP) curve.—The Committee directs the services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (on behalf of itself and defense agencies) to submit a WIP curve for each project requested in a budget submission over \$100,000,000 with the 1391 justification to the congressional defense committees.

Transfer of funds to and from the Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense Account.—The Committee directs the Department of Defense to submit a quarterly report to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the transfer of funds from military construction and family housing accounts to the Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense account. The report shall specify the amount transferred to the Foreign Currency account from each military construction and/or family housing account, and all other accounts for which an appropriation is provided in this Act, during the preceding fiscal quarter, and the amounts transferred from the Foreign Currency account to the above accounts during the same period. This report shall be submitted no later than 30 days after the close of each fiscal quarter. In addition, the Department of Defense shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress within 7 days of transferring any amount in excess of \$10,000,000 to or from the Foreign Currency account.

Bid savings.—The Committee has ascertained from cost variation notices required by 10 U.S.C. 2853 that the Department of Defense continues to have bid savings on previously appropriated military construction projects. The Committee's recommendation therefore includes rescissions to the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, and Defense-Wide construction accounts. The Committee directs the Secretary of Defense to continue to submit 1002 reports on military construction bid savings at the end of each fiscal quarter to the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of both the House and Senate.

Defense Access Roads (DAR).—The Committee is concerned about the surface transportation infrastructure around key military installations, especially those that handle the important protective functions required for the President and diplomats. The Committee strongly supports the utilization of the DAR program to address these congestion issues. The Committee urges the Department to examine if adjustments in Defense Access Roads eligibility thresholds are needed for installations that provide protective functions. Therefore, the Department should report back to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act on whether the DAR program adequately addresses the needs of installations that handle protective functions.

High performance and sustainable building requirements.—The Committee notes that in March 2013, the Department of Defense released Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 1-200-02, High Performance and Sustainable Building Requirements. UFC 1-200-02 defines the minimum requirements for planning, design and construction, renovation, repair, maintenance and operations, and equipment installation in new and existing facilities. In a policy memorandum issued in November 2013, military components were authorized to pursue greater energy and water efficiency if such initiatives are shown to reduce total ownership cost of the facility, or preserve or increase mission effectiveness in the face of projected resource scarcity. The Committee regrets that the Department of Defense has done little to increase the use of innovative building materials following the inclusion of similar language in the report accompanying the Howard P. Buck McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, H.R. 4435. The Committee recognizes that innovative technologies have expanded the availability of materials with lower embodied energy for facilities that require tall walls and large open spaces with minimal intermediate supports. In addition, design techniques such as advanced framing contribute to lower material costs, increased energy efficiency, and reduced waste in facilities. Therefore, the Committee encourages the Department of Defense to incorporate the use of innovative renewable building materials, systems, and design techniques that support the requirements of UFC 1-200-02 and the goals of achieving greater efficiency and lower environmental impacts at a lower material cost. Furthermore, the Committee encourages the Department of Defense to collaborate with the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Forest Service to advance its understanding of innovative renewable building materials and systems and jointly develop a plan on expanding their use as appropriate.

Alternative building materials.—The Committee believes that the Department of Defense (DOD) should explore other materials for the construction of its facilities. It has come to the Committee’s attention that the use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) has been used as an alternative building method to concrete and steel construction. CLT is an applicable material for low-rise, as well as mid-rise to high-rise construction and has a lighter environmental footprint than traditional concrete and steel construction systems. The advantages to using CLT are many, but the main benefits include: shorter construction times, fewer skilled laborers, better tolerances and quality, safer work environment, utilization of regional, sustainable materials, and reduction of carbon footprint of buildings. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary of Defense to study the economic viability of utilizing CLT in future DOD facilities and determine if any fiscal year 2017 or fiscal year 2018 project could be used as a demonstration project to accelerate the testing of CLT and report back to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act on its findings.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$663,245,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	503,459,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	503,459,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(159,786,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The Committee recommendation includes a rescission of \$25,000,000 from bid savings under Administrative Provisions.

The Committee recommendation includes additional funding for the Army in section 128 under Administrative Provisions for projects on the Services Unfunded Priority lists as approved by the Secretary of Defense and submitted to Congress in priority order.

Aging army hangars for Combat Aviation Units.—The Committee recognizes that the Army’s aging hangars housing combat aviation units are structurally deficient and do not meet the operational requirements of the Army’s Combat Aviation Brigades. A critical need exists for the Army to modernize infrastructure associated with operational needs, inclement weather, personnel changes, and other unforeseen circumstances. The Committee directs the Secretary of the Army to submit a report to the congressional defense committees not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act detailing the age and condition of the Army’s Combat Aviation Brigade aircraft maintenance hangars, a prioritization of the most deficient infrastructure assets, the plan to modernize or replace those hangars, and the required resources.

Air traffic control facilities.—The Committee is concerned that many of the Army’s air traffic control facilities are unsafe, antiquated, and do not provide adequate control, communications or observation abilities for the current air traffic levels at certain locations. For example, the current facility located at Fort Benning will become wholly inadequate at the current pace of operations and a replacement facility is necessary to ensure Air Traffic Services are available to support mission readiness and deployment platforms and the military flying community. The Committee is concerned that this could be a problem throughout the Army enterprise with

the recent reductions to the Department of Defense's construction accounts. Therefore, the Secretary of the Army is directed to conduct a risk assessment on Army air traffic control facilities throughout the Army enterprise and develop a plan to update these facilities. This assessment shall be submitted to the congressional defense committees not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$1,669,239,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	1,027,763,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	1,021,580,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(647,659,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(6,183,000)

The Committee recommendation includes a rescission of \$51,848,000 from bid savings under Administrative Provisions.

The Committee recommendation includes additional funding for the Navy and Marine Corps in section 129 under Administrative Provisions for projects on the Services Unfunded Priority lists as approved by the Secretary of Defense and submitted to Congress in priority order.

Townsend Bombing Range.—The Committee is closely monitoring the impact that the range expansion would have on the local timber economy. The Committee is concerned that the Department of the Navy is still failing to consider the impact this project will have on the local community and urges the Navy to quickly find a resolution on this issue.

F-35C Basing at MCAS Miramar.—During budget briefings the Committee was informed by the Marine Corps that a change in mission by the Navy to support the Pacific Commander had occurred. The new mission requirement involved the movement of an aircraft carrier from the East Coast to the West Coast. The Marine Corps requested in their fiscal year 2017 budget the hangars for the F-35B assets to be stationed on the East Coast. Therefore, the assets to support the West Coast-based carrier were not requested in fiscal year 2017 but planned for fiscal year 2019 when a carrier was to be on the West Coast. The Marine Corps provided the Committee the unfunded priorities list for fiscal year 2017 that was approved by the Secretary of Defense which included the assets necessary to support the West Coast-based carrier. Therefore, Committee has provided \$193,600,000 for the Marine Corps' number 1, 2 and 3 priorities from the Services Unfunded Priority lists as approved by the Secretary of Defense and submitted to Congress in priority order to support the Department of the Navy operational requirement in the Pacific Area of Responsibility.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$1,389,185,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	1,481,058,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	1,398,758,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	9,573,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(82,300,000)

The Committee recommendation includes additional funding for the Air Force in section 132 under Administrative Provisions for

one project on the Services Unfunded Priority lists as approved by the Secretary of Defense and submitted to Congress in priority order.

Air traffic control towers.—The Committee is concerned that the Department of the Air Force’s air traffic control towers have been neglected over the years and funding for military construction has been deferred to the out years of budget submissions. Many of the air towers are deteriorating and antiquated, creating significant life, safety, and health concerns. In some cases, towers have developed extensive mold issues and contain health risks related to the use of asbestos and lead-based paint. Additionally, obstructed views in some cases prevent 100 percent positive visual control of aircraft landing and taxiing on the airfield. The Committee urges the Department of the Air Force to prioritize funding for these towers in a much timelier manner. The Committee believes that these towers are valuable national security assets that the Department of the Air Force should maintain in a manner that will ensure their vital role in protecting U.S. national security interests.

Conditions at expeditionary facilities.—The Committee is concerned about reports of black mold at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and the effect it is having on the health of those serving at the Air Base. Therefore, the Air Force shall provide a report to the congressional defense committees on the status and way ahead to alleviate the mold issue as well as a comprehensive remediation plan not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

F-35A Aircraft Weather Shelter (SQD 2).—The Committee is concerned that the Air Force brought numerous new starts into the fiscal year 2017 budget submission that may prove difficult to execute in States with limited construction time periods. Therefore, the recommendation does not include \$82,300,000 for F-35A aircraft weather shelters for squad 2.

Offutt Air Force Base runway repair.—The Committee understands that the Air Force is providing operation and maintenance funding for runway repair at Offutt Air Force Base. The Committee directs the Air Force to follow the appropriate notification process for using operation and maintenance funding for large repair projects and to keep the Committee informed as to how the repair is proceeding.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$2,242,867,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	2,056,091,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	2,024,643,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(218,224,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(31,448,000)

The Committee recommendation includes a rescission of \$37,377,000 from bid savings under Administrative Provisions.

Transfer of funds.—The accompanying bill provides transfer authority to the Secretary of Defense to allow the transfer of funds to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate.

National Geospatial Intelligence Agency West Campus.—The Committee is concerned that the site selection and land acquisition for the new National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) West Campus Headquarters does not satisfy all existing Federal directives regarding federal construction projects. This includes Federal partnership, grant and contract programs requirements; maximizing return on Federal investment and minimizing environmental impact; and Executive Order 12072, which states that when a Federal agency's mission is to relocate or build a new facility, preference should be given to an urban site that provides the greatest socioeconomic redevelopment opportunity for the considered region. The Committee urges the Department to follow its current guidelines regarding federal construction projects.

The Committee is also concerned that site selection and land acquisition has yet to take place; therefore, the bill does not include the fiscal year 2017 request of \$801,000 for land acquisition. The Committee was informed that the cost of the land acquisition could be as much as \$15,000,000 and that one of the potential sites would be of no cost to the agency; therefore, the Committee directs NGA to request the full funding for the land after site selection has occurred. Finally, the military construction funding profile has not been determined and does not include a utility plant or a main office building; therefore, the Committee reduces the planning and design request and provides \$36,000,000 instead of \$71,647,000.

Special Operations Command military construction requirements.—The Committee remains concerned about the lack of transparency and consistency in SOCOM's process of evaluating and accounting for the military construction requirements for facilities writ large, including the out-years. The Committee notes that on many bases, there may be excess capacity as missions have relocated. However, as part of military construction planning, SOCOM does not as a matter of course assess the suitability of existing, non-SOCOM structures on installations that the Command may be able to modify and use if the structure is excess to the base commander's requirements. At a time of shrinking military construction budgets, and the drawdown of forces overall, this should be a planning requirement. The Committee is further concerned about the costing of facilities. There have been instances in which a facility cost has increased multiple times, and by a significant percentage, prior to award of the contract. Therefore, the Committee directs the SOCOM Commander to report to the congressional defense committees not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act on the construction requirements with respect to all SOCOM military priorities in priority order, to include unfunded requirements, the costs of each project, and an explanation of how the costing for each facility is determined by the command.

GUARD AND RESERVE ITEMS OF INTEREST

Enforcement of border security.—Recognizing the need to bolster resources for the enforcement of border security, the Committee instructs the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard to explore public-private partnerships with state and local governments, to design, and construct facilities adjacent to our southwestern border that will support National Guard activities and house and support assets used by Customs and Border Protection

and other law enforcement agencies for the terrestrial, maritime, and aerial surveillance of those borders, to include aircraft hangars suitable for unmanned aerial systems, and report back to the Committee not later than 180 days after the enactment of this Act.

Security/Access points at Air Reserve facilities.—Military construction budget constraints are negatively affecting the ability of the Department of Defense to address urgent transportation requirements at certain U.S. military installations. This includes both Security Forces Facilities and access that are necessary for the safety and well-being of employees, both civilian and military. The Committee is concerned that many Reserve facilities in the Department's inventory do not meet anti-terrorism and force protection requirements. Furthermore, these deficiencies contribute to traffic congestion at Reserve facilities and are serious problems both on base and on surrounding public roads. The Committee is concerned that the Department does not have a coherent strategy to address the growing problem of access and traffic congestion on Reserve installations during a time of severe budget constraints. As a result, traffic congestion and safety concerns on both internal base roads and public connecting roads at growth installations are likely to increase. Therefore, the Secretary of Defense is directed to submit to the Committee with the fiscal year 2018 military construction budget request the following reports: an updated list of certified unfunded Reserve access point requirements and list of unfunded requirements for Security Installations at Reserve facilities. Finally, each of the Reserve Components is further directed to submit, with the fiscal year 2018 military construction budget request, a list of how those requirements will be incorporated into their construction requests for fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$197,237,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	232,930,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	232,930,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	35,693,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The Committee recommendation includes additional funding for the Army National Guard in section 130 under Administrative Provisions for projects on the Services Unfunded Priority lists as approved by the Secretary of Defense and submitted to Congress in priority order.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$138,738,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	143,957,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	143,957,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	5,219,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$113,595,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	68,230,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	68,230,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(45,365,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The Committee recommendation includes additional funding for the Army Reserve in section 131 under Administrative Provisions for projects on the Services Unfunded Priority lists as approved by the Secretary of Defense and submitted to Congress in priority order.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$36,078,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	38,597,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	38,597,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	2,519,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$65,021,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	188,950,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	188,950,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	123,929,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$135,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	177,932,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	177,932,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	42,932,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The Committee recommendation includes a rescission of \$30,000,000 from unobligated balances under Administrative Provisions.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Security Investment Program (NSIP) consists of annual contributions by NATO member countries. The program finances the costs of construction needed to support the roles of the major NATO commands. The investments cover facilities such as airfields, fuel pipelines and storage, harbors, communications and information systems, radar and navigational aids, and military headquarters, both within NATO nations and for "out of area" operations such as Afghanistan.

The U.S. occasionally has been forced to temporarily delay the authorization of projects due to shortfalls in U.S. obligation authority. The Committee directs the Secretary of Defense to notify the Committee within 14 days of the U.S. taking action to temporarily delay the authorization of projects, or to temporarily withhold funds from previously authorized projects, due to shortfalls in U.S. obligation authority.

FAMILY HOUSING OVERVIEW

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$1,404,281,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	1,319,852,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	1,319,852,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(84,429,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

Family housing construction accounts provide funds for new construction, construction improvements, the Federal government costs for family housing privatization projects, and planning and design. The operation and maintenance accounts provide funds to pay for maintenance and repair, furnishings, management, services, utilities, leasing, interest, mortgage insurance, and miscellaneous expenses.

Family housing privatization progress reports.—The Committee directs the Department of Defense to continue submitting semi-annual progress reports on the family housing privatization program, including a breakout of military tenant satisfaction rates by project.

Foreign currency savings and sub-account transfers.—The Committee directs that savings in family housing operation and maintenance accounts from foreign currency re-estimates be used to maintain and repair existing family housing units. The Comptroller is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on how these savings are allocated not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act. In addition, the Committee directs the services and Defense agencies to notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress not later than 30 days of a transfer of funds between sub-accounts within the family housing construction and family housing operation and maintenance accounts, if such transfer is in excess of 10 percent of the funds appropriated to the sub-account to which the funds are being transferred. Notifications to the Committees shall indicate the sub-accounts and amounts that are being used to source the transfer.

Leasing reporting requirements.—The Secretary of Defense is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress quarterly on the details of all new or renewed domestic leases entered into during the previous quarter that exceed the cost threshold set by 10 U.S.C. 2828(b)(2), including certification that less expensive housing was not available for lease. For foreign leases, the Department is directed to: (1) perform an economic analysis on all new leases or lease/contract agreements where more than 25 units are involved; (2) report the details of new or renewed lease agreements that exceed the cost threshold set by 10 U.S.C. 2828(e)(1) 21 days prior to entering into such an agreement; and (3) base leasing decisions on the economic analysis.

Prioritizing base housing.—The Department of Defense should take into consideration, when prioritizing base housing projects: the commuting times for base personnel, length of waitlist for base housing and land available for development on the base.

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$108,695,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	200,735,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	200,735,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	92,040,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, ARMY

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$375,611,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	325,995,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	325,995,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(49,616,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$16,541,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	94,011,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	94,011,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	77,470,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, NAVY AND
MARINE CORPS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$353,036,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	300,915,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	300,915,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(52,121,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$160,498,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	61,352,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	61,352,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(99,146,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, AIR FORCE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$331,232,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	274,429,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	274,429,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(56,803,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$58,668,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	59,157,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	59,157,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	489,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$ ---
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	3,258,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	3,258,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	3,258,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$266,334,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	205,237,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	230,237,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(36,097,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	25,000,000

Accelerated clean-up.—The Committee has included additional funding for the Army and the Navy to accelerate environmental remediation at installations closed during previous Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) rounds. The Committee recognizes that many factors hinder the cleanup of BRAC sites. However, the Committee believes that strategic investments can lead to quicker clean-ups and faster turnover of DOD property to the local community. Therefore, the Secretary of Defense should submit to the congressional defense committees a spend plan for the additional BRAC funds not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

The bill includes 36 provisions of which 25 were in effect in fiscal year 2016 and 11 are new provisions. The administrative provisions included in the bill are as follows:

The bill includes section 101 prohibiting the use of funds for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction where cost estimates exceed \$25,000. An exception for Alaska is provided.

The bill includes section 102 permitting the use of construction funds for the hire of passenger motor vehicles.

The bill includes section 103 permitting funds to be expended on the construction of defense access roads under certain circumstances.

The bill includes section 104 prohibiting construction of new bases in the United States without a specific appropriation.

The bill includes section 105 limiting the use of funds for the purchase of land or land easements that exceed 100 percent of value except under certain conditions.

The bill includes section 106 prohibiting the use of funds to acquire land, prepare sites, or install utilities for family housing except housing for which funds have been appropriated.

The bill includes section 107 limiting the use of minor construction funds to relocate any activity from one installation to another without prior notification.

The bill includes section 108 prohibiting the procurement of steel unless American producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been allowed to compete.

The bill includes section 109 prohibiting the use of funds to pay real property taxes in foreign nations.

The bill includes section 110 prohibiting the use of funds to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification.

The bill includes section 111 establishing a preference for United States architectural and engineering services where the services are in Japan, NATO member countries, or countries bordering the Arabian Sea.

The bill includes section 112 establishing a preference for United States contractors for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or countries within the Central Command area of responsibility, except bids by Marshallese contractors for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll.

The bill includes section 113 requiring the Secretary of Defense to give prior notice to Congress of military exercises where construction costs exceed \$100,000.

The bill includes section 114 allowing funds appropriated in prior years to be used for new projects authorized during the current session of Congress.

The bill includes section 115 allowing the use of expired or lapsed funds to pay the cost of supervision for any project being completed with lapsed funds.

The bill includes section 116 providing that funds for military construction projects are available until the end of the fourth fiscal year following the fiscal year in which funds are appropriated, subject to certain conditions.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 117 allowing for the transfer of funds from Family Housing Construction accounts to the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund and funds from Military Construction accounts to the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 118 providing transfer authority to the Homeowners Assistance Program.

The bill includes section 119 requiring that funds in this title be the sole source of all operation and maintenance for flag and general officer quarter houses, and limits the repair on these quarters to \$35,000 per year without notification.

The bill includes section 120 making funds in the Ford Island Improvement Fund available until expended.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 121 allowing the transfer of expired funds to the "Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense" account.

The bill includes section 122 prohibiting the use of funds to relocate a unit of the Army that would impact more than 200 personnel.

The bill includes section 123 allowing the transfer of funds among projects and activities in accordance with the reprogramming guidelines.

The bill includes section 124 prohibiting the use of funds for projects at Arlington National Cemetery.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 125 rescinding funds from prior appropriations Acts.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 126 rescinding funds from prior appropriations Acts.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 127 rescinding funds from prior appropriations Acts.

The bill includes section 128 providing additional funding for Military Construction, Army.

The bill includes section 129 providing additional funding for Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps.

The bill includes section 130 providing additional funding for Military Construction, Army National Guard.

The bill includes section 131 providing additional funding for Military Construction, Army Reserve.

The bill includes section 132 providing additional funding for Military Construction, Air Force.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 133 rescinding unobligated balances from the fund established by Sec. 103(d) of 42 U.S.C. 3374 for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program.

The bill includes section 134 defining the congressional defense committees.

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 135 rescinding unobligated balances from prior appropriations Acts.

The bill includes section 136 prohibiting the use of funds to close or realign Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. The provision is intended to prevent the closure or realignment of the installation out of the possession of the United States, and maintain the Naval Station's long-standing regional security and migrant operations missions.

The bill does not include section 121 as requested to provide authority under a continuing resolution when an authorization bill has been enacted to obligate funds that have not been appropriated.

TITLE II

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level ¹	\$162,671,005,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request ¹	177,545,236,000
Committee recommendation in the bill ¹	176,068,336,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	13,397,331,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(1,476,900,000)
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request ¹	170,321,028,000
Fiscal year 2018 Committee recommendation in the bill ¹	170,321,028,000

¹All funding cited excludes amounts in the Medical Care Collections Fund.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) serves approximately 48,300,000 people or 14.8 percent of the total estimated resident population of the U.S. and Puerto Rico: 21,700,000 veterans and 26,600,000 family members of living veterans or survivors of deceased veterans. To serve adequately the nation's veterans, VA employs 350,000 people, making it one of the largest Federal agencies in terms of employment.

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (VBA)

COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$76,865,545,000
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	86,083,128,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	90,119,449,000
Fiscal year 2018 Committee recommendation in the bill	90,119,449,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	4,036,321,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

This appropriation will provide funds for service-connected compensation payments to an estimated 4,832,000 veterans, survivors, and dependents in 2017. In addition, pension payments will be funded for 507,000 veterans and their survivors. The average cost per compensation case for veterans in 2017 is estimated at \$16,273 and pension payments are projected at \$13,369.

The appropriation includes authority to transfer funding not to exceed \$17,224,000 in 2018 to General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration and Information Technology Systems. These funds are for the administrative expenses of implementing cost-saving provisions required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, Public Law 101-508, the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1992, Public Law 102-568, and the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1994, Public Law 103-446. These cost-saving provisions include verifying pension income against Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Social Security Administration (SSA) data; establishing a match with the SSA to obtain verification of Social Security numbers; and applying the VA pension cap for Medicaid-eligible single veterans and surviving spouses alone in Medicaid-covered nursing homes. The bill also continues to include language permitting this appropriation to reimburse such sums as may be earned to the Medical Care Collections Fund to help defray the operating expenses of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners.

READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$14,313,357,000
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	16,340,828,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	13,708,648,000
Fiscal year 2018 Committee recommendation in the bill	13,708,648,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	(2,632,180,000)
Fiscal year 2018 budget request	---

This appropriation finances the education and training of veterans and servicemembers through the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program. Supplemental education benefits are also provided to certain veteran members of the Selected Reserve and are funded through transfers from the Department of Defense (DOD). In addition, certain disabled veterans are provided with vocational rehabilitation, specially adapted housing grants, and grants for automobiles with approved adaptive equipment. This account also finances educational assistance allowances for eligible dependents of veterans who died from service-connected causes or have a total and permanent service-connected disability, as well as dependents of servicemembers who were captured or are missing in action. More than 82 percent of the funds in the account support the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The reduction in the fiscal year 2018 budget request is due to the availability of carried-over unobligated balances.

VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$77,160,000
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	91,920,000
Fiscal year 2017 current year request	16,605,000
Fiscal year 2017 Committee recommendation in the bill	16,605,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	107,899,000
Fiscal year 2018 Committee recommendation in the bill	107,899,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	15,979,000
Fiscal year 2018 budget request	---

The Veterans Insurance and Indemnities appropriation is made up of the former appropriations for military and naval insurance, applicable to World War I veterans; national service life insurance (NSLI), applicable to certain World War II veterans; servicemen's indemnities, applicable to Korean conflict veterans; and veterans mortgage life insurance, applicable to individuals who have received a grant for specially adapted housing.

The amount provided will enable the Department to transfer funding to the service-disabled veterans insurance fund and transfer additional amounts for payments for policies under the veterans mortgage life insurance program. These policies are identified under the Veterans Insurance and Indemnity appropriation since they provide insurance to service-disabled veterans unable to qualify under basic NSLI.

VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

	Program account (indefinite)	Limitation on direct loans for specially adapted housing loans	Administrative expenses
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	---	(\$500,000)	\$164,558,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request est.	---	(500,000)	198,856,000
Committee recommendation est. in the bill	---	(500,000)	167,612,000
Comparison with:			
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	---	---	3,054,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---	---	(31,244,000)

The purpose of the home loan guaranty program is to facilitate the extension of mortgage credit on favorable terms by private lenders to eligible veterans. This appropriation provides for all costs, with the exception of the Native American veterans housing loan program, of the Department's direct and guaranteed loans programs. The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 requires budgetary resources to be available prior to incurring a direct loan obligation or a loan guaranty commitment. In addition, the bill requires all administrative expenses of a direct or guaranteed loan program to be funded through a program account. Loan guaranties are made to servicemembers, veterans, reservists, and single surviving spouses for the purchase of homes, condominiums, and manufactured homes and for refinancing loans. The Department guarantees part of the total loan, permitting the purchaser to obtain a mortgage with a competitive interest rate, even without a down payment if the lender agrees. The Department requires that a down payment be made for a manufactured home. With a Department guaranty, the lender is protected against loss, up to the amount of the guaranty, if the borrower fails to repay the loan.

The increase above fiscal year 2016 funding for administrative expenses is directed to personal services (staffing) cost increases. At this time, the Committee has not approved the remainder of the requested administrative expenses increase for fiscal year 2017 because of a lack of any justification in the budget materials.

VA Loan Mortgage Service.—The Committee remains encouraged that the VA Loan Mortgage Service continues to perform favorably when compared to its commercial counterparts. However, the Committee recognizes the ongoing need to continually upgrade software tools that incorporate the latest analytic, forecasting and workflow methods. Such upgrades will further reduce the number of troubled loans still experienced by a segment of the veteran population. Further improved software will strengthen program accountability while simultaneously enhancing the veteran's Loan Guaranty experience. The Committee encourages the VA Loan Mortgage Service to consider using a common software with embedded analytic and forecasting tools in its upgrade.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

	Program account	Limitation on direct loans	Administrative expenses
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$31,000	(\$2,952,000)	\$367,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	36,000	(2,517,000)	389,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	36,000	(2,517,000)	389,000
Comparison with:			
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	5,000	(-435,000)	22,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---	---	---

This appropriation covers the subsidy cost of direct loans for vocational rehabilitation of eligible veterans and includes administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program. Loans of up to \$1,210 (based on indexed chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates) are available to service-connected disabled veterans enrolled in vocational rehabilitation programs when the veteran is temporarily in need of additional assistance. Repayment is made in monthly installments, without interest, through deductions from future payments of compensation, pension, subsistence allowance, educational assistance allowance, or retirement pay. Most loans are repaid in full in less than one year. The Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 requires budgetary resources to be available prior to incurring a direct loan obligation.

It is estimated that the Department will make 2,618 loans in fiscal year 2017, with an average amount of \$962.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT

Administrative expenses:		
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level		\$1,134,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request		1,163,000
Committee recommendation in the bill		1,163,000
Comparison with:		
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level		29,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request		---

The Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program, as authorized by title 38 United States Code, chapter 37, subchapter V, provides the Secretary with authority to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans for the purpose of purchasing, constructing, or improving dwellings on trust lands. The program will not require a new subsidy appropriation and has an unobligated indefinite subsidy authority balance of \$2,256,000.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA)

The Department operates the largest Federal medical care delivery system in the country, with 144 hospitals, 113 domiciliary rehabilitation treatment programs, 135 nursing homes, 300 Vet Centers, 80 mobile Vet Centers, and 755 outpatient clinics which include independent, satellite, community-based, and rural outreach clinics. Almost 7,000,000 patients will be treated in 2017.

The Veterans Health Administration is comprised of five accounts: Medical Services, Medical Community Care, Medical Support and Compliance, Medical Facilities, and Medical and Prosthetic Research. For the first four accounts, the Administration has requested total resources for fiscal year 2018 of \$66,385,032,000 in direct appropriations to fund the four advance appropriations of the VHA. In addition, VA will receive an estimated \$2,637,000,000 in

the Medical Care Collections Fund in fiscal year 2017. The Committee also provides \$663,366,000 for medical and prosthetic research.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$49,972,360,000
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	51,673,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 additional request	1,078,993,000
Committee 2017 additional recommendation	850,000,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	44,886,554,000
Committee 2018 recommendation in the bill	44,886,554,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	*(6,786,446,000)
Fiscal year 2018 budget request	---

*due to establishment of the new Medical Community Care account

This appropriation provides for medical services of eligible veterans and beneficiaries in Department medical centers, outpatient clinic facilities, contract hospitals, State homes, and outpatient programs on a fee basis. VA also supports hospital and outpatient care through the private sector for certain dependents and survivors of veterans under the DOD civilian health and medical programs.

The bill includes \$850,000,000 of the \$1,078,993,000 current year budget request, which is in addition to the advance appropriation that has already been provided. Within the funds provided, the Committee expects the resources to be used at the request level for hepatitis C, homeless programs, the post-9/11 caregiver program, longterm care, and the staffing costs VA must absorb as the Choice Act section 801 funds evaporate.

The Committee has included requested bill language to make available through September 30, 2019, \$1,400,000,000 of the Medical Services appropriation for fiscal year 2018.

Funding identified in the bill is in addition to the anticipated \$5,482,975,000 for medical services from the Veterans Choice Act in fiscal year 2017.

Uncertainties in advance appropriation requirements.—The Committee has become accustomed to the estimating problems inherent in providing large appropriations one year in advance. Each year, the “second bite at the apple” request for additional funding is a tell-tale sign of the shortcomings in the advance appropriation concept. But fiscal year 2018 seems like a watershed year for inaccuracy in estimating the advance appropriation. The Committee has provided the full advance request, but feels certain it is way off the mark. When considering the consolidated estimates for VA-provided care and the care in the community program, the budget request for the advance appropriation is more than four billion dollars below the equivalent program level for fiscal year 2017. Given recent history, it is inconceivable that VA health care costs would decline, especially with more veterans demanding more intensive services. The budget documents reveal that the budget estimate would require a reduction of almost 14,000 medical staff in 2018 and major cuts to programs like hepatitis C treatment and homeless assistance. A request that assumes such cuts to staff and services is irresponsible and is counter to the stability that VA says it needs. The Committee will expect periodic updates throughout the year as VA tries to generate a more realistic estimate.

Changes in funding requirements due to modeling.—The Committee expects VA to continue to include in the sufficiency letter required by section 117(d) of title 38, United States Code, that is due to the Congress on July 31 of each year, a description of any changes exceeding \$250,000,000 in funding requirements for the Medical Services account resulting from the spring recalculation of the Enrollee Healthcare Projection Model.

Allocation of health funding.—The Committee continues to be concerned that the process VA uses to allocate the health services appropriation through the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) and from them to the medical centers may shortchange the ultimate users because of excessive funding retained at headquarters or at the VISNs. The Committee continues to request a report each year not later than 30 days after VA allocates the medical services appropriation to the VISNs that identifies: (1) the amount of general purpose funding that is allocated to each VISN; (2) the amount of funding that is retained by central headquarters for specific purposes, with amounts identified for each purpose; and (3) the amount of funding that is retained by each VISN before allocating it to the medical centers, identifying separately the amounts retained for purposes such as network operations, network initiatives, and emergencies.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C treatment initiative.—One of the Committee's highest priorities is treatment services for veterans suffering from Hepatitis C. The veteran population has a much higher incidence of hepatitis C than the general population. VA indicates that 157,000 veterans in the VA healthcare system are potential candidates for hepatitis C treatment. Making investments now to provide the highly effective medications available will have profound effects in preventing liver disease and cancer for those veterans as well as the costs otherwise borne by VA for treating these illnesses. The VA healthcare system is uniquely positioned to treat its hepatitis C patients with trained clinicians and the necessary infrastructure. VA provides the full continuum of care that includes screening, linkage to care, adequate treatment, and follow up. Recent reductions in the price of hepatitis C drugs will make it possible for VA to treat as many as 1,500 new patients per week, with possible treatment of all cases within three years. To enable VA to reach these goals, the bill provides \$1,500,000,000 for hepatitis C treatment in fiscal year 2017, the same amount as fiscal year 2016 and the administration request.

Hepatitis C-related liver disease.—The Committee is pleased that the Department leads the country in hepatitis screening, testing, treatment, and research and requests the Department to lead research and prevention activities for Hepatitis C-related liver disease, cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer.

Homeless assistance

The Committee provides the full fiscal year 2017 budget request of \$1,591,365,000 for VA homeless assistance programs, in addition to an estimated \$5,643,053,000 for homeless veterans treatment costs. These programs include the Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem, the Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans, the Sup-

portive Services for Low-Income Veterans and Families, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development—Department of Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD–VASH) programs.

Female homeless veterans.—The Committee remains committed to helping homeless veterans and commends VA for its efforts in reducing homelessness among the veteran population. However, the Committee is concerned about VA's efforts to reduce homelessness among female veterans, and particularly those with dependent children. Dependent children often present additional challenges to those providing resources to homeless veterans. The Committee urges VA to work to provide equal treatment and assistance for female veterans and veterans with children.

Additional housing options.—The Department has made great efforts to find housing for homeless veterans and their families. However, to date, VA has not tested the concept of awarding grants to eligible entities to purchase and renovate abandoned homes for homeless veterans, who would then make rent or mortgage payments to the grantee. This approach could provide a pathway to stable housing for veterans, as well as address the problem of abandoned or foreclosed properties in some communities. The Committee directs the Department to outline what legislative changes would be required to establish such a program on a pilot basis and the feasibility and estimated cost of the concept. The report should be provided to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

Related needs of homeless veterans.—While VA has made strides in reducing veteran homelessness, its program clients need additional support beyond shelter. The Committee remains interested in the feasibility, advisability and cost of VA conducting a pilot program to award grants to eligible organizations to provide furniture, household items, and other assistance to formerly homeless veterans who have transitioned to permanent housing. The Committee requests a report on this concept not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

HUD–VASH program.—The Committee recognizes the important contributions the HUD–VASH program has made in reducing the number of homeless veterans and commends VA for implementing a case management system that keeps veterans housed longer by providing the supportive care many of them require. The Committee encourages VA to more creatively and collaboratively work with local social service agencies, especially in rural and small communities, to ensure that HUD–VASH voucher recipients are receiving the most comprehensive services available to them. Multiple jurisdictions around the country are implementing their own coordinated care initiatives alongside public housing programs, and in the interest of maximizing public investment and providing the best, most comprehensive care available, VA should seek to partner with local and State governments when possible. The Committee requests a report not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act identifying how many HUD–VASH vouchers are given to female veterans with children, female veterans without children, male veterans with children, and male veterans without children in each State. The report should also include the number of HUD–VASH vouchers distributed to veterans in rural, suburban, and urban areas per State.

Mental health issues

The Committee provides the full fiscal year 2017 budget request of \$7,831,890,000 for mental health programs. Of the amounts provided for mental health programs in fiscal year 2017, \$164,305,000 shall be used for suicide prevention outreach. Of the funds provided in the fiscal year 2018 advance appropriation, \$186,128,000 shall be used for suicide prevention outreach. The Department is directed to provide a report to the Committee not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act identifying a detailed expenditure plan for all suicide outreach programs for both fiscal years.

Veterans crisis line.—In light of the alarming number of suicides committed by veterans each day, the Committee is very concerned by recent failures involving the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL). As reported by the VA Inspector General (IG), some calls directed to the VCL were not answered or sent to voicemail or were answered by untrained volunteers, with a lack of quality control. The Committee includes bill language requiring the Secretary to ensure that the hotline provides immediate assistance from a trained professional for those who call and that the VCL adheres to all prevailing suicide counseling provider standards. The Committee is pleased that VA has already responded to the troubling IG report by increasing staffing, hiring a new program manager with proven experience running a mental health call center, establishing a larger working space for the VCL, and enhancing training.

Suicide among female veterans.—Female veterans are six times more likely to commit suicide than women in the general population. This alarming trend must be addressed by the Department without delay. The Committee directs VA to renew its focus on improving access to mental health services for female veterans and ensure that female mental health needs, which often differ from male needs in prevalence and expression, are met.

Collaboration with research universities.—The Committee continues to encourage VA to establish collaborations with research universities and teaching hospitals for the treatment of and research on mental health disorders, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), to improve the psychological health of veterans and train mental health professionals so they will understand the unique needs of veterans. The Committee requests a report on current VA-university partnerships on mental health research and training not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

Law enforcement liaison.—The Department is urged to implement a program that would designate a VA liaison to work with local law enforcement to ensure that the subsequent needs of veterans who are considered an immediate threat to themselves and others are addressed in a humane and respectful manner.

Mental health provider training.—The Committee is concerned about the impact of VA's flawed accreditation process that excludes qualified marriage and family therapists (MFTs) from employment at VA, unnecessarily causing vacant mental health provider positions within the VHA system at a time when these services are in critical need. The bill includes language requiring that marriage and family therapists meeting certain rigorous requirements be permitted to participate in VA healthcare. The requirements that must be met by the MFTs are: 1) holding at least a master's degree

in marriage and family therapy, or a related field, from a regionally accredited program; 2) being licensed as an MFT in a U.S. jurisdiction and possessing the highest level of licensure offered from the State, the District of Columbia, or U.S. territory in which they are licensed; and 3) passing the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Board Examination in Marital and Family Therapy (AMFTRB–EMFT) or California MFT Exam.

Clinical psychology training.—The Committee understands that after long delay VHA is close to completing the process of modifying its regulations to permit the training and employment of psychologists who are graduates of the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System (PCSAS), which now accredits 29 university-based PhD clinical psychology programs. The Committee urges VHA to complete this regulatory process to help increase the number of mental health clinicians available to the VA health care system.

Relationships with outside voluntary organizations.—The Committee urges VA to continue utilizing funds to establish and bolster existing relationships with veterans service organizations working closely with veterans suffering mental health issues, and to partner with organizations that work with both male and female survivors of sexual assault.

Mental health treatments.—The Committee is deeply concerned about the mental health of veterans and wants to ensure that all necessary tools for healing and successfully re-integrating into society are made available to them. One such tool is handheld all-in-one therapeutic listening devices. Over 200 medical studies, including several conducted within the VA system, have found improved mental health outcomes from using such tools, such as reduced symptoms of PTSD. The Committee is concerned that VA's use of these devices has decreased since their provision was shifted from the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service to individual medical centers. The Committee urges VA to emphasize to local medical centers the utility of therapeutic listening devices as an important component of treatment for a variety of mental health issues.

Access issues

Choice program.—The implementation of the Choice program has been rocky, and its effect on the use of VA appropriated funds has been very dynamic. The program started with slow usage but attracted veterans to use the traditional VA healthcare system for additional medical conditions. As VA appropriated funds ran short during 2015, funds were transferred from Choice on an emergency basis to prevent hospital closures. Currently, VA predicts that usage of Choice will accelerate and that Choice funding for section 801 of the program will begin to be exhausted in fiscal year 2016, with all Choice funds being spent by the end of fiscal year 2017. The unfortunate consequence is that appropriated VA funding will be required to backfill the substantial base of medical care created by the Choice Act. For fiscal year 2017, these additional costs to the appropriated funds included in the request are \$885,000,000, which come with no adjustment in overall appropriated discretionary caps. The fiscal year 2018 costs related to extension of services for veterans formerly provided by Choice will be in the billions

of dollars, and discretionary caps are not likely to accommodate such growth.

Communication problems within the Choice Program.—The Committee is concerned about communication gaps between contract care providers and veterans and the Choice third party administrators. The Committee is aware of numerous complaints from veterans and providers in some areas that they have experienced communication issues when scheduling appointments or resolving payment issues. Furthermore, even when veterans are able to connect with a contract provider, referrals are not always timely or within a reasonable geographic distance to receive care. There have been reports of veterans receiving questionable care and treatment from facilities to which they were directed. To address these problems, the Committee urges VA to work with outside contractors to hire personnel in underserved areas to strengthen the Choice Program's provider network based on existing and projected need.

Further expansion of Choice Program eligibility.—Subsequent eligibility expansions of the Choice Program by VA and by legislation have been welcome developments. These expansions, particularly those regarding geographic distance factors, have opened the aperture for the Choice Program and will allow more veterans to utilize non-VA care options. The Department is encouraged to implement these eligibility changes to the Choice Program in an expedited manner and to consider including travel time and total distance to a VA medical facility, which can address the veteran's specific healthcare needs, when determining eligibility for the Choice Program.

The Committee encourages VA to continue exploring options to further broaden the Veterans Choice Program so that more veterans can utilize non-VA care options when their health circumstances warrant a waiver. Specifically, the Committee requests the Department to consider, when approving waivers for treatment, the veteran's ability to travel given their medical and/or physical condition, in particular, when seeking treatment for chemotherapy or dialysis. The Committee requests a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act on the number of instances where waiver requests submitted by veterans were granted and/or denied.

Choice access problems in rural areas.—The Committee remains concerned about issues with access to healthcare in rural areas for veterans. A number of these veterans are having difficulties with a lack of network providers in the Choice Program. There are also concerns about access to specialized care within a reasonable distance. The Department is instructed to submit a report to the Committee not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act that shows a plan of action to address the deficiencies in access to care, both primary and specialty, in rural areas.

Choice Act staffing increases.—The Committee requests a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act that describes the amount of Choice Act funding each VISN received to hire additional staff; the number of staff hired; the number of employees who left VA in the same period; and the net gain for each of the following position categories—primary care, specialty care physicians and medical staff—at each VA VISN.

Medical staff retention.—The Committee expects VA to continue to report every six months on the number of medical staff who

have left the VA system, including a summary of the principal reasons explaining their departure, and a detailed plan of how VA will address and mitigate the principal reasons providers leave. The report should also identify the percentage of staff in primary care versus specialty care, and the percentage of medical staff at each facility, who complete an exit survey upon their departure.

Consolidation of non-VA care Programs.—The Committee is pleased that VA has submitted to Congress a comprehensive plan to restructure the Choice Program and consolidate it with the myriad other non-VA care programs operated by the Department. The Committee believes that a Choice-type model will be an important component of providing healthcare to veterans and encourages VA to embrace such changes.

Community health care center participation in the Choice Program.—The Committee understands that returning warfighters often prefer to receive care close to home and their families, and notes the high quality services provided by community health centers (CHCs). The Committee is pleased that some CHCs serve veterans through the Choice program by participating as part of local Choice networks. The Committee encourages the third party administrators currently operating these networks to enhance the quality of services they provide to veterans by recruiting additional CHCs as providers.

Integration of services.—The Committee is aware of private sector programs that effectively and efficiently leverage information technology and data interoperability capabilities to better coordinate and integrate health services for veterans across care settings. The Department is encouraged to consider the use of these private sector programs as a way to develop service integration and data sharing; monitor protocols; conduct performance metrics and trend analysis; and complete predictive analytics and systems improvement.

Comparison of care between in-house VA care and the Choice Program.—The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is directed to submit to the Committee not later than six months after enactment of this Act a report that evaluates from a sample survey the quality of care for veterans with respect to receiving correct medication, counseling, and the ability to see specialists in a timely manner. The GAO report should compare and contrast veterans who regularly go to a VA facility versus those who use the Choice Program and highlight the relative deficiencies or achievements in quality of care.

Access in outlying areas.—The Committee directs GAO to review the staffing, outreach, scheduling, and access management practices at the Department of Veterans Affairs Pacific Islands Healthcare System and report to the Committee not later than six months after enactment of this Act. The report should include comparisons between the VA Pacific Islands Healthcare System and VA healthcare in the continental U.S. on the following measures: healthcare quality; patient waiting times; follow up care appointment delays; community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) staffing levels and retention; staff working environment; and outreach programs.

Shared DOD-VA medical resources.—The Committee is concerned that veterans continue to experience delays in accessing

medical treatment in a timely fashion following the enactment of the Choice Act. Since 2012, VA and DOD have agreed to share resources to improve access to quality health care or increase cost-effectiveness of the health care provided by the Military Health System and the VHA as authorized in Section 8111 of title 38 USC and section 1104 of title 10 USC. The Committee encourages the Secretary to direct the network director of each of the VISNs to work with the appropriate representative of the armed services and enter into agreements with the military treatment facilities within their geographic footprint, as authorized, to increase access to care for veterans willing to be treated at those locations. Furthermore, the Committee requests that the Secretary report to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act about the plan to execute this request.

Delayed payments.—The Committee is concerned with reports of delayed payments by VA to community care providers. Ensuring prompt payment to these providers is essential to encouraging their participation in an expansion of access to healthcare outside of the traditional VA system. Accordingly, VA is expected to comply with section 1315 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, commonly referred to as the Prompt Pay rule. Not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act, VA is directed to provide to the Committee a comprehensive report detailing the reimbursements owed to outside providers in each State. The report will also document the dollar value of outstanding invoices more than six months overdue and the corrective actions being implemented to address these outstanding balances. This report should also describe the agency's plans to correct this delayed payment problem in the future.

Payments to veterans for emergency care.—The Committee directs VA to report to the Committee not later than 60 days after the enactment of this Act how VA intends to process emergency room care payments to veterans within 60 days of receipt of the bill.

Office of Rural Health.—The Committee provides the full fiscal year 2017 and 2018 budget requests of \$250,000,000 to improve access and quality of care for the 3,000,000 veterans residing in rural and highly rural areas. The Committee directs the Office of Rural Health to submit to the Committee not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act an operating plan for this funding, as well as any changes to that operating plan at the start of the fiscal year for which the funds are provided.

Caregivers in rural areas.—Recent studies have indicated that, while there are many similarities in tasks for caregivers of aging veterans in urban and rural areas, there are also a number of issues and needs unique to rural caregivers. The Department is requested to provide a report to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act identifying the needs of caregivers for veterans in rural areas that may not be addressed by existing VA assistance and outreach programs.

Use of telemedicine.—The Committee remains concerned about rural veterans' access to care and encourages VA to explore and implement innovative uses of telemedicine to provide care for rural and infirm veterans who do not have easy access to medical facilities.

Disruption in medical facility moves.—The Committee is concerned about past instances when VA announced plans to close a

CBOC without any publicly announced plan for alternative facilities to serve the veterans affected. To prevent future disruptions, the Committee directs VA to submit a written notification to the community and to the State's Congressional delegation 30 days before it plans to close a healthcare facility. Such notification should identify the alternative facility or facilities where VA plans for veterans in the area to receive care; address distance and travel concerns that may occur for veterans; and provide information on the type of care available at the alternative facilities.

Access expansion.—The Committee encourages VA to identify CBOC facilities for expansion possibilities in order to accommodate additional patients and provide enhanced services, particularly in rural areas. The VA is encouraged to consider existing CBOCs which are operating at full capacity, have a proven record of delivering services, and have community support to expand the facility.

Women's issues

Challenges for women veterans' care.—The Committee appreciates the progress made within the VA health care system to address the growing needs of women veterans, but it realizes that there is more to be done. Therefore, the Committee requests an analysis of the challenges facing female veterans within the VA health care system and the means within VA to address those challenges. The report should include what VA has accomplished and how it plans to bring more services to women. The report should be provided not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

Facility inadequacies for female VA patients.—VA healthcare facilities are often not structured to address the unique healthcare requirements presented by women veterans. In many cases, facilities lack the equipment and cannot execute the medical procedures that women expect when visiting their healthcare providers. VA is directed to ensure that all VA medical facilities meet VA standards to provide the specific health care needs of female veterans.

Delivery of gender-specific care to female VA patients.—The Committee is concerned that VA is not adequately addressing the health needs of female veterans, including obstetrics and gynecological care, and treatment for gender-specific conditions and diseases, whether through direct VA or contract care. The Committee is also concerned that VA services do not adequately address female veterans' unique needs in the research and treatment of PTSD. VA shall report to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act on its efforts to improve the delivery of health care for female veterans, particularly in regard to these specific disease areas.

Female providers.—The Committee urges the Secretary to seek to hire more female health care professionals in order to provide female veterans greater opportunities to choose the gender of their healthcare provider.

Women's mobile medical care.—The Committee encourages VA to consider the provision of female veterans' healthcare through mobile units that could operate in either rural or urban underserved areas. These units would have the capacity to provide preventive and primary healthcare services, education about the availability of benefits for female veterans, and outreach. VA is requested to provide a report to the Committee not later than 60 days after enact-

ment of this Act describing how a mobile medical unit program designed for women would be structured, whether the geographic concentration of female veterans makes such a program feasible, areas in the country with female veterans who currently lack access and for whom the mobile units would be appropriate, and the likely cost of a mobile unit program, including vehicles, equipment, staffing, and information technology.

Prescription drug abuse

Opioid epidemic.—The Committee is concerned with the ongoing opioid epidemic impacting the veteran community and requests a report on the availability of treatment and wait times for services for veterans with opioid addiction seeking care within the VA health care system. The report should include what VA has accomplished and how it would bring more services to those veterans. The Committee requests that this report be provided not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

Full spectrum of treatment options for opioid abuse.—The Committee is pleased that the Department has established and is implementing the VA Opioid Safety Initiative and is encouraged by the results it is producing in reducing the dependence of veterans on prescription opioids. However, the Committee is concerned that VA is not utilizing the full spectrum of treatment options for dealing with opioid addiction recommended by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The Committee encourages VA to expand the use of medication-assisted treatment and other clinically appropriate services to achieve and maintain abstinence from all opioids and heroin. The Committee directs VA to submit a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act on VA's ongoing review of prescription practices and addiction treatment protocols.

State prescription drug monitoring programs.—The Committee notes that, with the problem of opioid use disorders escalating among veterans, it is important that VA continue its efforts to partner with States to ensure that they have the capacity to exchange prescription drug information with VA. The Committee understands that 36 States currently have installed the technology to exchange data from their State prescription drug monitoring boards with VA and that 12 additional States will achieve that capacity by the end of 2016. VA is urged to assist these remaining States to speed their exchange capacity.

Other health issues

Nursing full practice authority.—The Committee understands that VHA will soon publish a proposed regulation to recognize the full practice authority of advanced practice registered nurses working at VHA. The Committee encourages VHA to seek input from appropriate external professional stakeholders and to give consideration to the policies of existing Handbooks, prior to publishing the final regulation. The Committee believes all possible outreach efforts should be used to communicate the proposed changes, to gather public comment, and to collaborate with Congress, stakeholders, VA medical staff, and external organizations.

Collaboration with historically black health professions schools.—Since 2008, the Committee has encouraged improved collaboration

between VA healthcare facilities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) health professions schools. The Committee acknowledges the progress made but recognizes that almost all improvements have been with smaller CBOCs, not the larger, urban VA hospitals. Although the Committee finally received the report on medical school affiliations well after the 90 day deadline, VA has yet to organize a national symposium of VA headquarters and VISN health leaders and leaders of the HBCU health professions schools, despite several Committee directives. Therefore, the Secretary is directed, again, to convene a symposium where minority collaboration concerns are discussed and addressed. A plan for this symposium should be submitted to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

Hispanic-Serving Institution affiliations with VA health care facilities.—The Committee continues to be concerned by the lack of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) medical school participation and collaboration with local VA hospitals in areas where HSI medical schools are located. The Committee urges the Secretary to develop a plan to expand local VA medical facilities' participation with HSI medical schools.

Hepatitis B virus (HBV).—The Committee is aware that: (1) Hepatitis B is more common among veterans than in the general population; (2) rates of testing of veteran patients fail to meet the guidelines recommended by the medical profession; and (3) only a fraction of those veterans who test positive receive treatment. Hepatitis B, if left untreated, may lead to advanced liver disease, liver cancer and the need for liver transplants, placing a greater financial burden on the veteran health care system. The Committee urges an aggressive and targeted outreach program, consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's viral hepatitis testing and treatment recommendations, to identify veterans with Hepatitis B and to facilitate and encourage treatment for those identified with the disease.

Infectious diseases screening.—The Committee applauds VHA for developing electronic clinical reminders for recommended HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis screening and urges VHA to implement these reminders in all appropriate settings. To further improve screening rates, the Committee urges VHA to offer support to VISNs to implement recommended screening, including innovative strategies like point-of-care testing.

Blast injury treatment.—The nature of the current military conflict and increasing use of improvised explosive devices has left some servicemembers with blast injuries that include spinal cord injury and trauma to the reproductive and urinary tracts. The Committee is concerned about the care of these injured servicemembers after they return home, and notes that there is not parity between the DOD and VA treatment of servicemembers with these injuries. In House Report 114–92, the Committee directed VA to provide a report not later than 180 days after enactment of that Act detailing the scope and extent of veterans facing infertility issues due to military service during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The Committee expects to receive this report within the mandated timeframe.

End of life care.—Veterans often have unique physical, psychological and emotional needs at the end of life, including PTSD,

service-related disabilities, and other emotional and spiritual needs. The Committee applauds VA for its efforts to develop and/or strengthen partnerships with local hospice organizations, increase access to hospice and palliative care for veterans in their communities, and provide information and resources to improve end-of-life care for veterans. The Committee encourages the Department to continue to foster delivery models that allow veterans to receive concurrent hospice or palliative care while receiving active disease treatment.

Medical opinions from non-VA health care providers.—In order to conserve VA's resources, enable faster rating decisions, and reduce the number of appeals, the Committee encourages VA to accept medical opinions from non-VA health care providers when the evidence is sufficient for rating purposes.

Volunteer physicians.—The Committee is concerned with the delay in required reporting on and implementation of the Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans Program. The pilot program continues to remain a priority of the Committee and the delays in implementation and reporting as required by P.L. 113–235 are of significant concern. The Committee directs VA to submit the required reports not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act.

Marketing and outreach efforts.—The Committee requests VA to submit a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act identifying the range, scope and cost of its current marketing and outreach efforts, both for traditional VA programs and the Choice Act.

Eligibility for vet centers.—The Committee is aware of the barriers that prohibit former members of the military from obtaining care for service-related disabilities if they were separated from the military in an other than honorable status. The Committee recognizes that veterans who separated from the armed forces in an other than honorable status may be treated through the Vet Center Program as long as they meet the eligibility requirements of 38 U.S.C. Section 1712A(c). Recognizing that the provision of treatment to this population is in the best interest of the individual, the Committee encourages the Secretary to reach out proactively to veterans who were separated from the armed forces in an other than honorable status to notify them of the services they may obtain at Vet Centers.

Caregiver program.—The Committee recognizes the value provided to caregivers by the VA Caregiver Support program. However, eligibility for the Caregiver Support Program extends only to those veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001. The Committee requests that the Department provide a report to the Committee not later than six months after enactment of this Act which identifies: (1) the estimated population of veterans who would be eligible for the Caregiver Support Program, if program eligibility were made available to veterans of all service eras; (2) estimated projections of the number of veteran caregivers who would seek to enroll and participate in the Caregiver Support Program, if program eligibility were made available to veterans of all service eras; and (3) the estimated cost and resources necessary to incorporate all service era veterans in the Caregiver Support Program.

VA teleradiology program.—The Committee is aware that VA provides much of its teleradiology service through its national program, but understands that, with the initiation of the Choice program, VA has additional options for radiology services through non-VA providers. The Committee requests a report not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act describing the agency's long-term plan to provide radiology services, identifying the relative costs and efficiencies of the options that have been considered relative to its final plan.

Vaccine procurement.—The Committee encourages VA to consider including vaccines produced through recombinant DNA technology in addition to traditionally produced vaccines in future solicitations to facilitate the competitive process for all vaccine manufacturers.

Data-driven veterans prosthetic care outcomes.—The Committee commends the Department for deploying advanced, proven lower-limb prosthetic digital health technology to provide real-world data documenting activity in the community for veterans with lower limb prostheses. Accurate activity data documenting how veterans function with their prosthetic devices offers new opportunities to improve outcomes, increase activity, and improve the quality of life for veterans who have lost limbs. The Committee requests the Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service to provide a report not later than 120 days after enactment of this Act detailing the location of VA medical centers and other VA facilities where this technology is available; the number of veterans who have utilized the technology; and plans for making the technology more widely available to benefit veterans with limb loss, including possible plans to making the collection of such outcomes data the standard of care throughout VHA.

Reporting VA care capacity for severely disabled veterans.—The Committee encourages VA to reinstate the reporting initially required in the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 on the Department's capacity to provide for the health care needs of severely disabled veterans, including veterans with spinal cord dysfunction, blindness, amputations, and mental illness. This reporting requirement should be presented by facility and by VISN. The information will assist Congress in determining whether VA has maintained its capacity to provide for the special and rehabilitative needs of veterans.

Use of antimicrobial cleaning technology.—The Committee requests VA to submit a report to the Committee not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act detailing the VA's current use of antimicrobial cleaning agents in its facilities, the cost of such cleaning supplies and the application process, and the potential cost and safety benefits of utilizing antimicrobial cleaning technology that has the ability to reduce toxicity and remain active and effective on surfaces and equipment over a multi-day period.

PTEN mutation awareness.—The Committee encourages VA to ensure that screening for the phosphatase and tensin homolog (PTEN) tumor suppression gene and its possible mutations are included in its cancer panels, when appropriate, and that medical staff are trained to recognize cancer genetic syndromes, including PTEN. The Committee understands that the mutation may pass from generation to generation, with evidence that families of Vietnam veterans are particularly affected.

National Veterans Sport Programs.—The bill includes for fiscal year 2017 the fiscal year 2016 level of \$9,005,000 for the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events.

VA Pre-Medicine Internship Program.—Pre-medicine internships are designed to help interested individuals understand the realities of life as a doctor. One of the common pieces missing in applications is the experience of shadowing. The Committee recognizes the obstacles young professionals face in obtaining shadowing opportunities required for entrance into many healthcare professional schools. The Committee also understands that while VA allows shadowing there is no formal shadowing program at VA. The Committee urges VA to explore the feasibility of creating a system to facilitate shadowing opportunities with VA medical professionals for individuals pursuing advanced medical training.

MEDICAL COMMUNITY CARE

Fiscal year 2018 advance appropriation request	\$9,409,118,000
Committee 2018 advance appropriation recommendation	9,409,118,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	+\$9,409,118,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	---

The Medical Community Care account was created in the Surface Transportation and Veterans Health Care Choice Improvement Act of 2015. It is intended to consolidate all community care programs under a single appropriation. For fiscal year 2017, the bill finances the account through a transfer of \$7,246,181,000 from the advance-funded Medical Care accounts. The amount transferred is equivalent to the funding of the separate non-VA community care programs that are being consolidated through an authorizing bill. Funding of the account for fiscal year 2018 is provided in the bill through an advance appropriation of \$9,409,118,000, comparable to the advance appropriations for the other Medical Care accounts. Of the 2018 advance appropriation, \$1,500,000,000 is available until September 30, 2019.

MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$6,144,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	6,524,000,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	6,654,480,000
Committee 2018 recommendation in the bill	6,654,480,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	130,480,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	---

The Medical Support and Compliance appropriation funds the expenses of management and administration of the Department's health care system, including financial management, public health and environmental hazard, quality and performance management, medical inspection, human research oversight, training programs and continuing education, security, volunteer operations, and human resources.

The Committee has included requested bill language to make available through September 30, 2019, \$100,000,000 of the Medical Support and Compliance appropriation for fiscal year 2018.

Funding identified in the bill is in addition to the anticipated \$16,262,000 for medical support and compliance from the Veterans Choice Act in fiscal year 2017.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$5,020,132,000
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	5,074,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 additional request	649,000,000
Committee 2017 additional recommendation	---
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	5,434,880,000
Committee 2018 recommendation in the bill	5,434,880,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2017 enacted level	360,880,000
Fiscal year 2018 advance budget request	---

The Medical Facilities appropriation provides funds for the operation and maintenance of the Department's health care system's capital infrastructure. Included under this heading are provisions for costs associated with utilities, engineering, capital planning, leases, laundry, grounds keeping, garbage, housekeeping, facility repair, and property disposition and acquisition.

The bill does not include the current year budget request of \$649,000,000, which would be in addition to the advance appropriation that has already been provided. If the Secretary determines that additional fiscal year 2017 funds are required, he can request a transfer from the other Medical Care accounts.

The Committee has included requested bill language to make available through September 30, 2019, \$250,000,000 of the advance Medical Facilities appropriation for fiscal year 2018.

Funding identified in the bill is in addition to the anticipated \$15,512,000 for medical facilities from the Veterans Choice Act in fiscal year 2017.

Within the funds provided for the green management program, no funding shall be used for solar or wind projects due to concerns about mismanagement of previous projects.

Medical imaging equipment.—The Committee remains committed to helping VA in its efforts to ensure a timely process for VA medical centers to receive the medical imaging equipment that they need to take care of veterans. The Committee urges VA to strive for a 120-day turnaround for these equipment orders. The Committee requests that VA consider more education at individual VA medical centers regarding high-tech medical equipment purchasing processes and seek ways to eliminate redundant paperwork requirements for such orders. The Committee encourages VA to add information regarding procurement processes in the area of high-tech medical equipment, including support for VISN Imaging Committees, to its existing educational opportunities. In addition, the Committee urges VA to coordinate between capital equipment purchases, facilities funding for site readiness, and training of staff to use the equipment to ensure that facilities can use it as quickly as possible after purchase.

Mechanical insulation assessments.—The Committee acknowledges the cost savings possible through energy savings associated with proper insulation, and encourages VA to work in collaboration with industry partners to conduct a mechanical insulation energy and water assessment at several representative VA hospitals. The assessment should study the potential for improved energy and water efficiency of the selected medical center mechanical systems by applying mechanical insulation in repair, replacement, or upgrade applications. Assessment results shall be shared through a

report to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

Bakersfield outpatient clinic.—The Committee is concerned with the lengthy period VA has taken to lease a new outpatient clinic in Bakersfield, CA pursuant to Public Law 111–82. Outpatient clinics greatly reduce the need for veterans to travel long distances for care by providing reliable medical services closer to a veteran’s home. The new outpatient clinic would replace the Bakersfield community-based outpatient clinic and would provide expanded primary care and mental health services while offering a range of specialty care clinics. This project would simultaneously increase veterans’ access to healthcare locally as well as reduce the caseload at other facilities in the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. While VA received congressional authorization for the project in fiscal year 2010 and has allocated funding for it, the project has been delayed for years and is still in the acquisition phase. The Committee urges the Department to expedite the project in light of the urgent need for expanded healthcare services. The Committee directs the Secretary to report to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act on past actions and the future plan forward, including the timeline for this project, and to provide periodic progress reports to the Committee every 120 days. These periodic progress reports shall include an explanation of any changes to: (1) the project’s status; (2) the expected cost of the lease; and (3) the projected completion date.

MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$630,735,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	663,366,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	663,366,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	32,631,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

This appropriation provides for medical, rehabilitative, and health services research. The bill makes this account funding available through September 30, 2018. Medical research is an important aspect of the Department’s programs, providing complete medical and hospital services for veterans. The prosthetic research program is also essential in the development and testing of prosthetic, orthopedic, and sensory aids for the purpose of improving the care and rehabilitation of eligible disabled veterans, including amputees, paraplegics, and the blind. The health services research program provides unique opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the health care delivery system. Budgetary resources from a number of areas, including appropriations from the medical care accounts, reimbursements from DOD, grants from the National Institutes of Health, private proprietary sources, and voluntary organizations, provide support for the Department’s researchers. Estimated 2017 research resources beyond the research account are \$1,249,000,000.

PTSD research.—The National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder sets the VA agenda for research and education on PTSD, with seven research divisions located at VA facilities. The Center also conducts education and training, and coordinates the VA National PTSD Brain Bank. The bill provides up to \$40,000,000 for

the Center in fiscal year 2017, compared to the budget request of \$19,107,000.

The Committee recognizes the importance of the VA National Center for PTSD in promoting better prevention, diagnoses, and treatment of PTSD. The Committee further recognizes the importance of this research for veterans, their family members and those experiencing community violence. The Committee encourages the National Center to conduct further research on the effects of PTSD for veterans who live in communities affected by violence, particularly in low-income areas and communities of color.

Respiratory diseases.—The Committee notes the high rates of respiratory diseases in returning OEF and OIF veterans, and encourages VA to expand its research portfolio to better understand the causes of these respiratory diseases and potential treatment options.

Innovative treatments.—The Committee recognizes that VA rightly provides only those medical treatments that are based on sound clinical research results. On occasion, practitioners and companies have brought to VA new treatments which seem promising, but which lack clinical trial-tested results on large groups of subjects. The Committee understands that VA has recognized the difficulties practitioners face in gathering enough clinical evidence to justify their treatments and is considering developing a Center of Innovation for research support. The Committee encourages VA to start such a Center and suggests two possible treatments as appropriate candidates for initial research—hyperbaric oxygen therapy and magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy.

- The Committee understands that private clinical studies have demonstrated that hyperbaric oxygen therapy can provide positive results for patients suffering from PTSD and TBI. The Committee encourages VA to begin studies through the Center to develop evidence that would more conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of this treatment. Studies should explore partnering with private clinics currently providing hyperbaric oxygen therapy, provided that such clinics meet appropriate standards and guidelines for the screening of patients and provision of care.

- The Committee understands that magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy (MeRT) has successfully treated a number of veterans with PTSD, TBI, chronic pain, and opiate addiction. Recent clinical trials have produced promising results in the evolution of MeRT treatment. The Center is encouraged to conduct research on the possible benefits of EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy with a larger population of veterans suffering from PTSD, TBI, chronic pain, and opiate addiction.

Stroke research.—The Committee understands that in the aftermath of the closure of the VA QUERI stroke health services research center in fiscal year 2015, VA has lacked a central entity to focus research on the disease. The Committee encourages VA to designate a centralized research hub for stroke research to bring together treatment, research, and education to support health provider competencies; identify gaps in medical research and coordinate research efforts; and integrate new knowledge and the latest technology—such as adaptive software-enabled robotic exoskeleton rehabilitation and robotic prosthetics—into stroke patient care delivery across VA.

Exoskeleton research.—The Committee recommends that VA investigate the possible cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, and economic benefits of powered exoskeletons, provided by multiple manufacturers, for spinal cord injury and stroke rehabilitation and home/community use.

Canine therapy.—The Committee is aware that canine therapy for treatment of PTSD and TBI symptoms is an emerging alternative therapy to pharmaceutical treatments. While still experimental, canine therapy has demonstrated effectiveness in treating PTSD and other psychological disorders for psychiatric patients, patients with substance abuse problems, and victims of trauma. The Committee notes that canine therapy is a promising area for further research as a complementary or alternative treatment for the signature wounds of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Committee continues to encourage VA to expand its research on canine therapy to validate its therapeutic effectiveness in the treatment of PTSD and TBI.

Sleep research.—The Committee is encouraged by the robust VA portfolio of basic and clinical sleep research and requests the Department to explore the linkages between sleep and cognitive functioning in veterans.

Intergenerational effects of toxic exposures.—The Committee understands that exposure to toxic chemicals can have lifelong and intergenerational effects, the impacts of which are still being determined. The Committee recognizes that the generational effects of toxic exposure have not been sufficiently studied to determine what conditions children and grandchildren of exposed veterans may face. The Committee encourages VA to continue to monitor scientific studies regarding the effects of toxic exposure on veterans and their family members.

Prosthetics for females.—The Committee believes that a proportionate amount of prosthetics research should be focused on prosthetics meant for females, based on the number of female veterans with prostheses. The need for this type of research is acute, as most prostheses are designed to fit male veterans. The Committee repeats its direction that VA, in collaboration with the Prosthetic Women's Workgroup, issue a comprehensive report on female veteran amputees and their access to prosthetics. This report shall be submitted to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

Colorectal cancer research.—Colorectal cancer is treatable if detected early, yet it is the second leading cause of cancer death in America. The National Cancer Institute estimates the annual cost of colorectal cancer will be almost \$20 billion by 2020, with Medicare and VA responsible for much of that cost. VA has made screening patients for colorectal cancer a priority. The Committee encourages VA to support additional research and development in the field, including investigation of a less costly diagnostic blood test and a stool-based screening test.

Alzheimer's disease research.—The Committee is aware of recent research that suggests TBI and PTSD may increase the chances of Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned by VA estimates that the number of veterans with dementia will be as high as 218,000 in fiscal year 2017, a more than five-fold increase in the last decade. Therefore, the Com-

mittee encourages VA to conduct additional peer-reviewed research on Alzheimer’s disease. To the maximum extent possible, VA should target its research activities to the milestones issued in the National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease and coordinate its efforts with the National Institutes of Health.

Antimalarial medications.—Mefloquine is an antimalarial medication, both discovered and utilized by DOD. It is known to have specific acute side effects such as dreams, and its use has raised concern about possible long-term adverse health effects. Although DOD has initiated two research studies intended to review the potential adverse health effects of this medication, the studies have been hampered by the poor quality of data available on deployed troops who took the medication and what health care they received. The Committee understands that VA currently has a survey underway which asks veterans about the use of antimalarial medications and symptoms experienced, such as imbalance, dizziness or lightheadedness, vertigo, and fatigue. The Committee requests VA to provide to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act a summary of the survey results when complete and to outline what possible research projects the survey data suggest.

Research coordination.—The Committee recognizes the critical gap between basic research and clinical implementation of effective treatments for PTSD and TBI for veterans and urges VA to share its research on neuroscience with the private sector and consider establishing a consortium to coordinate with private sector research efforts. If a consortium is feasible, VA should organize public-private partners to work together to drive collaborative and innovative research on the neurobiology of PTSD with regard to trauma-associated genetic, epigenetic and transcriptional mechanisms and to galvanize efforts across basic research, translational science, and clinical delivery of treatments for TBI.

MEDICAL CARE COLLECTIONS FUND

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Care Collections Fund (MCCF) was established by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–33). The Department deposits first-party and pharmacy co-payments, third-party insurance payments and enhanced-use collections, long-term care co-payments, Compensated Work Therapy Program collections, Compensation and Pension Living Expenses Program collections, and Parking Program fees into the MCCF. The Department uses these funds for medical care and services to veterans. The estimate of fees that will be collected in fiscal year 2017 is \$2,637,000,000.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$271,220,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	286,193,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	271,220,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	— —
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(14,973)

The National Cemetery Administration was established in accordance with Public Law 93–43, the National Cemeteries Act of 1973. It has a fourfold mission: to provide for the interment of, in any national cemetery with available grave space, the remains of

eligible deceased servicemembers and discharged veterans, together with their spouses and certain dependents, and to permanently maintain their graves; to provide headstones for, and to mark graves of eligible persons in national, State and tribal, and private cemeteries; to administer the grant program for aid to States and tribal governments in establishing, expanding, or improving State and tribal government veterans' cemeteries; and to administer the Presidential Memorial Certificate Program. This appropriation will provide for the operation and maintenance of 134 operational national cemeteries, two rural National Veterans Burial Grounds, and 33 other cemeterial installations.

The bill includes language making \$26,600,000 of the total available until September 30, 2018.

Placement of emblems of belief on headstones of unclaimed, deceased veterans.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to permit the placement of emblems of belief on headstones of unclaimed, deceased veterans if reliable, recent documentation of the veteran's beliefs can be produced (such as through dog tags or other military identification documents).

Rural burial access.—The Committee continues to be concerned that there are geographic pockets in the country that would qualify for the VA rural veterans burial grounds initiative, but which are not served because their State as a whole does not qualify for it. Since eight percent of veterans live in areas that do not meet the VA goal of having access to a burial option within 75 miles of their home, the Committee requests a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act describing VA's future plans to narrow the gap of veterans without reasonable access to burial. The Committee encourages VA to include in its plans consideration of options in which private entities would donate land to establish rural cemeteries and the establishment of satellite cemeteries.

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$336,659,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	417,959,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	336,659,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	---
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(81,300)

The General Administration account provides funds for the Office of the Secretary, six Assistant Secretaries, and three independent staff offices. The Committee has included bill language to make available through September 30, 2018, up to \$10,000,000 of these funds and to permit the transfer of funds in this account to the General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration account.

The bulk of the requested increase for General Administration—\$72,600,000 and 204 additional fulltime equivalent staff—is intended for the establishment of the Veterans Experience Office. While the Committee supports the Secretary's efforts to improve the ways VA interacts with veterans, it has doubts about the wisdom of establishing a large new office with regional staffing at this

late date in the administration. The bill does not include specific funding for this purpose.

Position vacancies.—The Committee is concerned about the large number of vacancies among senior positions at VA medical centers throughout the country. The Committee directs the Secretary to develop and submit to Congress not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act a plan to: (1) hire highly qualified medical directors for each medical center that lacks a permanent director; (2) identify possible impediments to staffing facilities with permanent directors; and (3) assess the possibility of promoting and training qualified candidates from within VA for promotion to Senior Executive Service positions.

Delays in hiring.—The Committee is concerned about whether the hiring and credentialing process may contribute to longer wait times for veterans seeking healthcare. The Committee requests a report on the average length of time to fill a healthcare provider slot at a representative sample of medical centers, including: the time it takes the resource board to approve the hire of a new position; the time it takes to post the job announcement; how long the interview process takes; and the length of time for credentialing; as well as any internal VA goals that exist for the time each step in the process should take. The report should also describe how often a healthcare provider reaches the credentialing process phase of the process, but does not end up hired because of another hiring opportunity outside VA. If VA does not collect this data in a systematic way, it should report this to the Committee and begin efforts to collect it in the future. This report should be provided to the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

VA budget office communication.—The Committee has traditionally channeled most of its inquiries and requests for information and assistance through the VA budget office. The Committee reiterates its longstanding position that, while the Committee reserves the right to call upon all VA offices, the primary communication between the Committee and VA should normally be through the budget office. Responses to Committee inquiries, regardless of whether they concern funding or policy, are to be transmitted without delay by other offices within VA, unless otherwise requested by the Committee. In addition, to facilitate the work of the Committee, it expects that the Department will make available to all personal and committee staff of Members of the Committee the same direct contact with the budget office. The Committee also expects that a staff member of the VA budget office will be present at every meeting held between the chairman and ranking member of the Full Committee and Subcommittee and the Secretary or other senior VA officials.

Additional budgetary information.—The Committee continues its request that items described in the fiscal year 2015 House report 113–416 continue to be included in the budget justifications submitted each year. These items include: displaying a current year estimate for all accounts and for the budget year and the advance year; providing a reimbursable FTE summary chart for the General Administration account; providing an FTE by grade and regional/central office totals chart for the Information Technology Systems account; and providing the appeals caseload information requested for the Board of Veterans Appeals. The Committee would also like

a quarterly report identifying the total amount the Department obligates for outreach and awareness marketing campaigns, with a description of each campaign supported.

In addition, in an effort to improve the Committee's understanding of the Department's mental health services treatment programs, the Committee requests the Secretary to include the following data in the fiscal year 2018 budget materials:

- information on mental health treatment to include the number of veterans treated, by each type of VA medical facility, including hospitals, nursing homes, CBOCs, and domiciliaries; the number of visits; number of discharges; and the average length of stay for inpatient and residential treatment;
- the annual incidence of veteran suicides nationwide;
- the number of clinical fulltime equivalent psychiatrists, advanced practice psychiatric nurses, psychologists, social workers providing mental health services, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists reported by setting of care or program type; and
- a diagnostic composition of patients treated based on the health problems listed in the International Classification of Diseases.

The Committee requests that VA return in the 2018 budget to prior year data presentation in the budget justifications in several areas:

- The Medical Care charts shown on pages VHA-17-23 of the fiscal year 2017 budget justification should be disaggregated as in prior years into the four Medical Care accounts with Choice funding for each account shown separately within the account.
- Program area highlights should be aggregated into one area of the justification rather than being spread throughout the justification.
- Explanations of changes from the budget year to the advance budget year should be included for the three mandatory accounts with advance appropriations.

Quarterly financial information reports.—The bill includes an administrative provision which continues the requirement for submission of the quarterly financial information required in the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016.

Staff relocations within VA.—The bill continues the administrative provision requiring written notification 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more fulltime equivalent staff from one organizational unit of the Department to another.

Data on women and minority veterans.—The Committee recognizes the lack of data specific to women and minority veterans that is made available to Congress by VA. The Committee recommends, when applicable and when data exist, that the Secretary display information in reports submitted to Congress identifying information separately for women veterans and minority veterans.

Asian American representation on the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans.—The Committee commends the Advisory Committee for its work over the past calendar year, and encourages the Secretary to consider appointing, in keeping with the demographic

make-up of America's veteran community, an additional Asian American to the Advisory Committee in the coming year.

Small, minority- and women-owned businesses.—The Committee directs the Department to submit a quarterly report to the Committee on its efforts to work with small, minority- and women-owned businesses. The report shall specify the number of small, minority- and women-owned businesses receiving contracts from funds appropriated under this Act, and the amount awarded to each small, minority- and women-owned business receiving contracts from funds appropriated under this Act.

Customer service improvements.—As part of its new focus on improving the veteran experience with the Department, the Committee encourages VA to review and update its customer service policies described in documents such as the Service Recovery section of the Veterans Health Administration Handbook (VHA Handbook 1003.2). The most recent update to this customer service section was in August, 2003, more than 12 years ago. The section specifically outlines the patient communication and service improvement standards that VA employees should be striving to meet. The provision of VA health services has dramatically changed since this section of the handbook was issued, along with the agency mission priorities advocated by the Secretary. As part of the overall agency reboot of procedures and culture that is underway, the handbook should be overhauled.

Public relations and communications spending.—The Committee has heard reports of substantial VA spending on outside contracts for public relations and communication activities. While the Committee supports the outreach services for which VA has used external contracts, such as public service announcements informing veterans of available mental health and homelessness programs, the Committee feels it needs to maintain a level of oversight for these contract activities. The Department is requested to provide a biannual report identifying the number of contracts signed with external entities for public relations and communications activities that are over \$1,000,000 in value, along with a brief summary of the purpose of the contracts.

Fee basis claims processing.—The Committee recognizes the need for veterans and their community care providers to have accurate and timely processing of veteran and vendor claims for medical services. There have been multiple problems with processing these claims, throwing some veterans and providers into debt collection status because of VA's failure to pay claims promptly. The contract for the current VA Fee Basis Claims System (FBCS) will be recompeted at the end of the year. The Committee understands that VA plans to use this opportunity to standardize and redesign the capabilities of the system in anticipation of higher rates of fee basis claims, as non-VA care programs are consolidated. The Committee requests a report once the new contract is awarded, identifying the system's enhanced capabilities, improved timeliness, and imbedded standardization and security features.

Randolph-Sheppard Act.—The Committee encourages VA's activities pertaining to the Randolph-Sheppard Act, which creates opportunities for blind business owners, including veterans, to operate vending facilities on Federal properties. The Committee requests a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act

identifying: (1) the universe of VA facilities subject to the Randolph-Sheppard Act requirements to extend to State licensing agencies the opportunity to seek space for blind vendors to conduct business; (2) the number of licensing opportunities that have been offered to State licensing agencies; and (3) the number of facilities that currently have a vending operation managed by a blind entrepreneur.

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$109,884,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	156,096,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	156,096,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	46,212,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The bill makes \$15,610,000 of this funding available through September 30, 2018.

The Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) is the component of VA responsible for making final decisions on behalf of the Secretary for the thousands of claims for veterans benefits that are presented to BVA for appellate review. The majority of the BVA’s workload derives from the benefit claims initiated at the VBA regional offices. The appellate process has multiple steps, most of which occur at the local regional office level. If a veteran is not satisfied with a regional office determination, he or she may appeal to BVA for a final agency decision. BVA adjudicates appeals covering all areas of veterans benefits, but most of the workload concerns appeals for veterans’ disability compensation or pension benefits. As the disability compensations claims backlog at VBA dwindles, the appeals workload at the Board increases correspondingly. Pending appeals are projected to increase by 57 percent from 66,778 at the end of 2014 to 105,012 by the end of 2016.

The bulk of the requested fiscal year 2017 increase is targeted to increasing staffing by 242 fulltime equivalents that are needed to adjudicate and process appeals dispositions. The Committee appreciates the Board’s comprehensive analysis of what future steps need to be taken to manage its burgeoning backlog of cases. The solution proposed by the Board is a combination of a time-limited increase in staffing aligned with significant legislation changes to limit some of the statutory provisions that produce long delays in appeals. Although VA is working with affected stakeholders to develop legislation that will win the support of veterans and Congress for the needed statutory changes, the Committee is somewhat skeptical that the Board’s proposal will prevail during the current administration’s tenure. Nevertheless, the Committee supports the budget request as a necessary step to address the appeals backlog within the current statutory limitations.

The bill also provides the \$19,100,000 requested in the Information Technology Systems budget to support the Appeals Modernization initiative. The initiative will convert the Board’s largely paper-based system to an electronic one that will be integrated with the Veterans Benefits Management System that is used to process initial disability claims.

GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS BENEFITS
ADMINISTRATION

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$2,707,734,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	2,826,160,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	2,826,160,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	118,426,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) account provides funding for VBA to administer entitlement programs such as service-connected disability compensation, education benefits, and vocational rehabilitation services.

The bill makes available through September 30, 2018, up to \$141,000,000 of these funds.

The Committee provides \$2,826,160,000 for the General Operating Expenses, VBA account. Despite the funding constraints faced by the Committee, the Committee believes that one of its top priorities must be to support the activities in this request. The bill supports the full request of \$26,695,000 for the centralized mail initiative to consolidate inbound paper mail from the regional offices to a centralized intake site and \$152,924,000, \$10,000,000 above the request, for the Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) to scan paper claims and convert them into digital format. The Committee provides the full request (\$37,356,000 from VBA and \$143,000,000 from IT) for the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), the paperless claims processing system. VBMS allows VBA to centrally manage the claims workload at the national level and direct cases electronically across its network of regional offices to match claims demand with available processing capacity. Lastly, the bill provides \$19,100,000 in IT for the Board of Veterans Appeals modernization initiative to convert its largely paper-based process to an automated, integrated system.

Claims backlog.—VA has no greater responsibility than ensuring veterans and their survivors receive timely, accurate decisions on their disability compensation and pension claims. For many years, too many veterans have waited too long to receive their benefits. While the backlog has dropped dramatically, the Committee directs the Department to continue its efforts to address the remaining backlog of disability benefit claims and develop and incorporate new information technology and customer service enhancements to put VA on a path to reach a functional zero backlog by the end of 2016. The Committee further urges VA to continue to develop methods by which it can work closely with DOD, the IRS, the SSA, and other Federal partners to identify electronic data-sharing opportunities and process reforms to streamline workflows and limit paper claims filing.

Performance reporting.—The Committee directs VA to continue the specific reporting requirements on claims processing performance and backlog first identified in House Report 113–416 and incorporated into section 229 of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016.

Claims processing deficiencies.—The Committee continues to be concerned with the backlog at the Oakland, California VA regional office (VARO). According to the January 2016, VA Office of Inspector General report, the Oakland VARO continues to have delays in

processing informal claims and a number of veterans whose claims were not processed in a timely manner faced significant delays in benefit payments. The Committee encourages the Oakland VARO Director to conduct a complete review of all remaining claims that may be informal and ensure adequate training for Oakland VARO staff on processing informal claims. VBA is requested to submit a report not later than 30 days after the end of calendar year 2016 outlining the number of claims received and processed at the Oakland regional office in 2016; the accuracy scores for those claims; the average time to complete a claim; employee scores on speed and quality of rating; the amount and type of employee training that was conducted; and the amount of overtime that was used.

Staffing levels.—The Committee appreciates the efforts by VBA to reduce the disability compensation claims backlog. However, the Committee urges VBA to reevaluate its staffing levels at the regional office level and increase staff at a rate similar to increases in claims receipts to help better meet the needs of veterans.

Appeals claims processing.—The Committee has provided the full request for VBA activities, including VBA activities at the initiation of an appeal. It is essential that the growing backlog in veteran appeals claims be addressed by VA. VBA has neglected its share of responsibility for the first stage of appeals of veteran claims in its effort to reduce the initial disability claims backlog and has lost sight of the appeals process.

The Committee directs VBA to provide veterans with a thorough explanation of the analysis and information used to deny an initial claim when issuing its notification letter.

Population diversity.—The Committee recognizes the diversity of the veteran population. Currently, VA recognizes many special groups of veterans and tailors the delivery of earned benefits and services to ensure that the particular needs of these groups are met. The preferences of millennial veterans pose specific challenges to the Department as it seeks to fulfill its mission. The Committee encourages VA to recognize millennial veterans as a special group within the veteran population and to establish a panel of millennial veterans to provide advice and insight to the Secretary into Department efforts, with additional emphasis on military-to-civilian transition and retraining opportunities.

Administrative relief.—House Report 114–92 urged the Secretary to continue to grant or extend equitable relief to eligible veterans initially deemed eligible in instances of administrative error. In addition, the report also directed the Secretary to provide a report containing a statement as to the disposition of each case recommended to the Secretary for equitable relief under 38 U.S.C. 503 for each preceding year. The Committee expects this report to be submitted on time and looks forward to the Equitable Relief report and a resolution on this issue.

Access in underserved areas.—The Committee urges VBA to increase its presence and outreach to veterans living in remote and underserved areas such as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands by sending VBA staff to areas beyond the VA offices every 3 to 4 months, especially areas where veterans are unable to travel by car or ferry to reach a VBA office. Veterans living in these areas, particularly elderly and disabled veterans who may

have difficulty accessing VBA services via the internet or phone, should have an opportunity to speak, in-person, with VBA staff.

Military sexual assault (MST) claims.—The Committee understands VBA is developing and implementing new training initiatives and procedures for PTSD claims related to military sexual trauma. The Committee is pleased with the increased focus on this area and encourages VA to continue to build on the strides that have been made, including intensive training and identifying specialized claims employees for MST-related claims. The Committee also directs VA to conduct veteran outreach initiatives and publicize benefits veterans may be entitled to as a result of MST. In addition, the Committee recognizes that MST affects both female and male veterans and encourages VA to continue its efforts to provide equal treatment and assistance for both female and male veterans.

Transition to civilian jobs.—The Committee is aware of efforts such as the Transition Assistance Program to help servicemembers transition to civilian life. The Committee is concerned about continued obstacles that veterans face in transitioning to the civilian workforce, including to the Federal workforce. The Committee strongly supports greater coordination between Federal agencies to ensure that veterans can successfully transition to the civilian workforce, including through the facilitation of the licenses and credentials to translate skills and training from the military to civilian sector jobs.

Alternative use of education benefits.—With approximately one million veterans settling into American communities in the next three to five years, the Committee believes that it is important to find innovative ways to support veterans in their professional development. The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides post-secondary education as the principal option for veterans when they return. However, this may not meet the need of every veteran, as each individual possesses unique skill sets and experiences from their time in service that may be better suited to pursuing a career as a business owner. Therefore, the Committee encourages VA to work closely with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to further improve entrepreneurial opportunities for veterans. The Committee requests a report from VA analyzing the feasibility of using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for business capital formation for qualified veterans, in consultation with the SBA's recommendations. This report shall be due to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act.

Transition to law enforcement jobs.—The Committee is aware of national and State-level recruitment efforts to help veterans transition from military service to careers in civilian law enforcement. The Committee requests that the Secretary submit a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act on the type of training and transition assistance veterans receive to transition from military service to law enforcement.

Intermediate care technician positions.—The Committee encourages VA to establish veterans education connection centers at VA medical centers, such as the one established at the Louis Stokes Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Cleveland, Ohio. The Committee is pleased with VA's decision to expand the number of intermediate care technician (ICT) positions at VAMCs,

since this program has the ability to augment staffing by utilizing the military training, knowledge, skills and experience of former DOD medics and corpsmen and Coast Guard corpsmen. The Committee requests VA to report on the impact analysis of the ICT program to guide possible future expansion. This analysis should include the impact of the ICT role on costs, access, and patient satisfaction, and innovative ways clinics are using ICTs to improve the coordination of patient care, particularly in the home healthcare arena. This report shall be submitted to the Committee not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act.

Reducing fraud against veterans.—The Committee notes that only agents or attorneys who have met all qualifications and standards prescribed by VA are allowed to charge a reasonable fee to assist a veteran in filing a claim or appeal with VA. The Committee is concerned that financial predators across the country are targeting veterans, offering to help with their cases and charging very high fees, and providing them with little or no assistance. The Committee recommends that the Secretary be more aggressive in referring for criminal prosecution individuals and entities that defraud a veteran of benefits in order to discourage financial predators from continuing to target and defraud veterans.

State and county veteran service officers receiving access to VA records.—The Committee encourages the Secretary to work with State and county Veteran Service Officers to explore options for allowing authorized Veteran Service Officers “read only” access to VBMS records for the purpose of identifying individuals who may be eligible for State or local benefits in addition to Federal VA benefits.

Service records loss through fire.—The 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in Overland, Missouri destroyed millions of military service records. This loss has created numerous challenges for some veterans and has prevented them from accessing the benefits and decorations they have earned through their service. While VA has an established process for veterans affected by this fire, the coordination between VA and DOD could be improved. The Committee urges the two Departments to create a clear, coordinated plan to improve the process to address the issue of proving military service when a veteran’s official service record has been lost or destroyed while in possession of the Federal government.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$4,133,363,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	4,278,259,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	4,220,869,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	87,506,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(57,390,000)

The Information Technology Systems account supports information technology (IT) services such as systems development and performance, operations and maintenance, information protection, and customer support. The program permits the effective and efficient delivery of veterans’ healthcare services and benefits programs.

Within the account total, the Committee allocates in bill language \$1,247,548,000 for pay and associated costs, which is \$25,000,000 below the budget request; \$2,502,052,000 for operations and maintenance, which is \$32,390,000 below the request; and \$471,269,000 for development, modernization, and enhancement, which is the same as the request. The bill makes available \$36,300,000 of pay and associated costs and \$177,900,000 of operations and maintenance funds until September 30, 2018. All development, modernization, and enhancement funds are available until September 30, 2018.

Although funding constraints require the Committee to provide a funding level below the request, the level provided includes a \$87,506,000, or a 2.1 percent, increase over fiscal year 2016, which will permit investment in high priority areas. The Committee identifies in particular as high priorities: \$143,000,000 for the Veterans Benefits Management System (in addition to \$37,356,000 which is provided for VBMS in the General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration account); \$19,100,000 for the Board of Veterans Appeals modernization effort; \$20,000,000 for Section 508 compliance efforts; \$168,113,000 for VistA Evolution, the modernization of the electronic health record (EHR); and \$91,761,000 for interoperability and Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) health.

The Committee has had a longtime interest in assuring that DOD and VA health records for servicemembers and veterans can be exchanged electronically so that doctors across the street or across the world will be able to learn the patient's health history. While disappointed that DOD and VA chose to develop two different health record systems, the Committee has been reassured by both agencies that the records will be fully interoperable. Committee members were startled to learn during the recent hearing with the Secretary that VA is rethinking the approach it previously chose (to modernize its VistA electronic health record) and is now considering other options, including purchasing a commercial off-the-shelf product. The Committee is concerned about what implications this detour will have on the completion time for the project (previously promised for 2018), its cost, and the usability of the VistA modernization products already completed.

Consistent with previous appropriations bills, the Committee includes language to fence a portion of the funding provided for the electronic health record until VA provides requested information listed in the bill language. The Committee believes this fencing language is especially important as VA changes direction on development of the electronic health record. The language requires VA to: (1) demonstrate it has met the interoperability required in the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act by December 31, 2016; (2) provide the business case for VistA Evolution that is guiding VA's considerations; (3) provide a strategic plan, lifecycle cost estimate and master schedule for any system chosen; and (4) describe the implementation plan for the transition from the Project Management Accountability System (PMAS) to its new project delivery framework, the Veteran-focused Integration Process (VIP). The bill language fences the \$168,113,000 of funds requested for VistA Evolution until these conditions are met, but does not restrict the funding provided for interoperability or VLER Health.

An administrative provision limits the funding for the electronic health record provided by the Veterans Health Administration to \$40,000,000 from the Medical Support and Compliance account.

The Committee continues to include bill language prohibiting obligation or expenditure of funds for information technology systems development, modernization and enhancement until VA submits to the Committees a certification of the amounts. In addition, the Committee continues bill language permitting the transfer of funding among the three subaccounts upon approval of the Committees. The bill contains language which allows for the reprogramming of funds among development, modernization and enhancement projects upon prior notification to, and approval by, the Committees. The bill continues to include language indicating that funds for development, modernization and enhancement are available only for the projects and in the amounts specified in the report accompanying the Act.

The chart below reflects the Administration's budget request for development projects and includes the Committee's recommendation for each. This chart will serve as the Department's approved list of development projects, and all requested changes are subject to the reprogramming guidelines as outlined in the accompanying Act.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

[in thousands of dollars]

Project	Budget Request	Committee Recommendation
Electronic Health Record Interoperability and VLER Health	17,322	17,322
Vista Evolution	63,339	63,339
Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS)	85,288	85,288
Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER)	17,857	17,857
Veteran Customer Experience	73,624	73,624
VHA Research IT Support Development	15,066	15,066
Other IT Systems Development	198,773	198,773
Total All Development	471,269	471,269

The Committee expects the Office of Information Technology to continue to provide an IT expenditure report to the Committees on Appropriations on a monthly basis. This report shall include a comparison to the project costs included in the development, modernization, and enhancement project funding chart included in the House report, and provide an explanation for any differences in excess of \$1,000,000.

Security concerns.—The Committee continues to be concerned about the protection of veterans' personal and medical data. As such, within six months of enactment of this Act, the Committee requests the Department to submit a report on VA's use of cybersecurity best practices as it applies to datacenter security and mobile device management. This includes, but is not limited to: data center perimeter security, segmentation to improve lateral security within a data center or network, mobile device management protocols, and security protocols and identity management for remote access to data and applications. The Department should also identify measures taken to effectively contain and minimize a breach if it occurs.

Appointment scheduling system.—The Committee is frustrated that VA has spent years attempting to modernize its appointment scheduling system, investing in two systems and ultimately abandoning them. The consequence of these failures has been abundantly clear in the past several years as many VA facilities were found to be manipulating scheduling systems and failing to provide timely service to veterans. The Committee understands that VA is again considering how to modernize and standardize scheduling. The Department is directed to submit a report to the Committee not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act describing what alternatives VA has considered, including promising private sector practices, what functionalities a new system requires, and the anticipated timeframe for installation of a new system nationwide. The Department is encouraged to consider private sector scheduling solutions that may include trained patient care managers and strategies that have worked in other settings and develop a pilot of feasible options.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG)

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$136,766,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	160,106,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	160,106,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	23,340,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The OIG was established by the Inspector General Act of 1978 and is responsible for the audit, investigation, and inspection of all VA programs and operations. The overall operational objective is to focus available resources on areas which would help improve services to veterans and their beneficiaries, assist managers of Department programs to operate economically in accomplishing program goals, and to prevent and deter recurring and potential fraud, waste, and inefficiencies.

The bill makes \$14,800,000 of this funding available until September 30, 2018.

The funding increase provided in the bill above the fiscal year 2016 level is targeted to the OIG's increasing workload, as it investigates myriad allegations of possible misconduct, poor patient care, and claims processing inaccuracies. The Committee understands the additional funding will be used to hire 100 fulltime positions at both new and existing locations nationwide, especially in areas in the southern and western tiers of the country and areas where there is currently no permanent OIG presence and a growing veteran population.

Transparency.—Due to recent accounts alleging unjustified delays in release of reports pertaining to patient wait times and criminal investigations to the general public, the Committee believes that all reports prepared by the IG should be released publicly within 30 days of completion. The OIG could be perceived as biased by the public, and its effectiveness undermined, when its actions do not fully support transparency.

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$1,243,800,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	528,110,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	528,110,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(715,690,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	—

The Construction, Major Projects appropriation provides for constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities under the jurisdiction of or for the use of VA, including planning, architectural and engineering services, assessments, and site acquisition where the estimated cost of a project is \$10,000,000 or more.

The Committee recommendation makes all but \$33,800,000 of these funds available for a five-year period.

Continuing the practice first established in fiscal year 2016, the bill restricts the availability of funding for major construction projects costing more than \$100,000,000 until VA certifies it has signed an agreement with an appropriate non-VA government entity to serve as the design and/or construction agent for the project. For fiscal year 2017, two major construction projects above the \$100,000,000 threshold are funded, with restricted funds totaling \$222,620,000. Within the account, the bill also provides \$49,490,000 for the contract fees for the outside agent chosen for the projects. The Committee has taken this action in hopes that the gross mismanagement of the Denver, Colorado VA hospital project will never recur.

The bill funds the following items as requested in the budget submission:

CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

[in thousands of dollars]

Location	Description	Funding
VHA:		
Long Beach, CA	Seismic Corrections—Mental Health and Comm. Living Center.	30,200
Reno, NV	Upgrade seismic, safety, utilities, and expand clinical services.	192,420
Advance planning and design	Various Stations	65,000
Major Construction Staff	Various Stations	24,000
Claims Analysis	Various Stations	5,000
Hazardous Waste	Various Stations	10,000
Judgment Fund	Various Stations	9,000
Non-Dept. Fed Entity Project Management Support.	Various Stations	49,490
Total VHA		385,110
National Cemetery Admin. (NCA):		
Elmira, NY	New National Cemetery—Western NY	36,000
Las Animas, CO	New National Cemetery—Southern CO	36,000
Jacksonville, FL	Gravesite Expansion	24,000
South Florida, FL	Gravesite Expansion	31,000
Advance Planning and Design Fund	Various Stations	10,000
Total, NCA		137,000
Gen. Admin/Staff Offices:		
Dept APDF for Major		6,000
Total, Staff Offices		6,000
Major Construction Total		528,110

To enhance the Committee's capacity to conduct oversight on VA's facility construction efforts, several administrative provisions are continued in the bill: (1) no funding amount greater than \$5,000,000 may be reprogrammed between construction projects unless approved by the Committees on Appropriations of both House of Congress; (2) any change to the scope of a construction project is not permitted without the approval of the Committees; and (3) VA must report any bid savings of \$5,000,000 or more on projects as soon as they are identified.

Budget justification materials.—The Committee was disappointed that VA did not comply with the fiscal year 2016 conference report directive about additional information to be included in the fiscal year 2017 VA budget justification documents describing its major construction project requests. The Committee expects that the fiscal year 2018 justifications will include the information described in the 2016 conference report.

Alternative financing.—The Committee is concerned about meeting the need for access to high quality veterans health care facilities, including in rural areas where access to facilities, including clinics and hospitals, is more limited. The Committee is pleased that VA is considering the creative use of public-private partnerships to meet this need and that the agency has developed the following criteria for possible projects: (1) Congress has provided partial funding; (2) VA has identified a need for the project through its long-range capital planning process by listing the project on its Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) priority list; and (3) the local community has agreed to provide not less than 25 percent of construction costs. The Committee requests that VA provide a list of facilities that meet these criteria and provide it to the Committee not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act. Such alternative financing mechanisms could be an important corollary to the increasing use of Medical Community Care in the future.

Research infrastructure.—The Committee notes the Final Report on VA Research Infrastructure, completed in 2012, documented significant deficiencies in VA research laboratories across the VA system. The Committee is pleased the VA Office of Research and Development is reviewing the status of those deficiencies and looks forward to receiving updated reports on each VISN as they are completed. The Committee urges VA to allocate the appropriate resources needed to address the remaining deficiencies identified in the reports.

Training for VA personnel engaged in facility management.—The Committee continues to be concerned about the lack of training and certification provided to engineering, construction and facility management staff with regard to building operations and maintenance. A recent GAO report found that VA has not provided clear guidance to personnel regarding required training from either the Engineering or Construction and Facility Management Divisions. Therefore, the Committee requests a report not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act about the number of personnel trained and certified in compliance with the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act and the actions VA is taking to demonstrate clear guidance on training requirements for facility managers, building engineers, operations and maintenance staff.

Use of the Treasury judgment fund.—In the past several years, VA has had significant disputes with general contractors managing its major construction projects. In some cases, the claims disputes have had to be resolved with payments from the Department of Treasury Judgment Fund. The Committee requests the OIG to review VA’s claims and settlement practices relating to payment of contractors for major medical construction projects and the Department’s reimbursement of Treasury’s Judgment Fund and submit a report not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act. The report should include VA’s total required reimbursements to the Judgment Fund, the construction projects for which the settlements were required, and whether VA has fully reimbursed the Judgment Fund for all VA claims paid through the Fund.

Construction Oversight.—The Committee is aware that commercial off-the-shelf building information modeling systems are routinely used in the private sector to manage the design and construction of large-scale facilities. These models have been proven to facilitate the delivery of large-scale construction projects ahead of schedule with significant savings. Therefore, the Committee encourages VA to examine if a fully competitive acquisition and implementation of commercial off-the-shelf building information modeling systems could be used to improve the timeliness and cost of VA medical facilities. The Committee requests a report not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act that describes: (1) how a model project delivery system would be tailored to VA construction needs at one or more projects included in the Strategic Capital Investment Plan (SCIP); (2) the acquisition of commercial building information modeling tools necessary to produce or utilize high fidelity project information; and (3) project management, reporting, and implementation support for VA construction projects during design, construction, and operations using 3D models to identify and mitigate cost, schedule, or technical risk and to better manage engineering change orders.

CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$406,200,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	372,069,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	372,069,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(34,131,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

The Construction, Minor Projects appropriation provides for constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department, including planning, assessment of needs, architectural and engineering services, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is less than \$10,000,000.

As with the Major Construction account, the Committee recommendation makes these funds available for a five-year period.

Funding identified in the bill is in addition to the anticipated \$115,830,000 for minor construction from the Veterans Choice Act in fiscal year 2017.

Mobile surgical units.—In P.L. 114–113, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, Congress directed VHA to establish two pilot projects at VA medical centers designed to gauge the cost-savings and clinical benefits of using mobile sur-

gical units to cover for operating rooms taken out of service for repair or refurbishment. The Committee urges VHA to expedite selection of two pilot projects and report to the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act about the status and preliminary results of the pilots.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$120,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	80,000,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	80,000,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(40,000,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

This appropriation provides grants to assist States to construct State home facilities, for furnishing domiciliary or nursing home care to veterans, and to expand, remodel, or alter existing buildings for furnishing domiciliary, nursing home, or hospital care to veterans in State homes. A grant may not exceed 65 percent of the total cost of the project. The bill makes this funding available until expended.

GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$46,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	45,000,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	45,000,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	(1,000,000)
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	---

This program provides grants to assist States and tribal governments with the establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans cemeteries which are operated and permanently maintained by the States and tribal governments. Grants under this program fund up to 100 percent of construction costs and the initial equipment expenses when the cemetery is established. The States and tribal governments remain responsible for providing the land and for paying all costs related to the operation and maintenance of the State cemeteries, including the costs for subsequent equipment purchases. The bill makes this funding available until expended.

Public-private partnerships.—In order to provide a burial option to those veterans who may not have reasonable access to a national cemetery or State cemetery, the Committee encourages VA to prioritize funding under the State Veterans Cemetery Grant program for the establishment of veterans cemeteries in rural and highly rural areas. Additionally, States and local governments are encouraged to utilize public-private partnerships that are currently available to help defray the cost of operation and maintenance of a State veterans cemetery.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

The bill includes 38 administrative provisions, 32 of which were included in the fiscal year 2016 bill and six of which are new.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 201 allowing for the transfer of funds among three mandatory appropriations. The Administration proposal to modify this provision is not adopted.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 202 allowing the Department to transfer funding among the four medical appropriations accounts in fiscal year 2017. The Administration proposal to modify this provision is not adopted.

The bill includes section 203 allowing for salaries and expenses funds to be used for hire of passenger vehicles, lease of facilities or land, and purchase of uniforms.

The bill includes section 204 providing that only funding in “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects” can be used for the purchase of any site for any new hospital or home or to construct any new hospital or home.

The bill includes section 205 requiring the Department to be reimbursed for medical services it provides to any person not defined as a beneficiary to ensure the Department is receiving payment for all medical services provided.

The bill includes section 206 allowing for the use of funds appropriated in fiscal year 2017 for “Compensation and Pensions”, “Re-adjustment Benefits”, and “Veterans Insurance and Indemnities” for payment of accrued obligations recorded in the last quarter of fiscal year 2016.

The bill includes section 207 allowing for the use of fiscal year 2017 funds to pay prior year obligations resulting from implementation of sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 208 allowing the Department to use surplus earnings from the national service life insurance, U.S. Government life insurance, and veterans special life insurance program to administer these programs.

The bill includes section 209 allowing the Department to obligate enhanced-use lease proceeds for administrative expenses that were incurred in a prior fiscal year during the year funds are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 210 limiting the amount of reimbursement the Office of Resolution Management and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication can charge other offices and accounts of the Department for services provided.

The bill includes section 211 requiring the Department to collect current and accurate third-party reimbursement information for the purposes of third-party insurance collections. If persons receiving care or medical services do not disclose this information, the Department is allowed to bill them reasonable charges for services provided.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 212 allowing the Department to use enhanced-use lease funds for construction and alteration of medical facilities.

The bill includes section 213 allowing the Department to use the Medical Services appropriation for expenses related to the broader mission of medical care to veterans.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 214 allowing the Department to transfer Medical Care Collections to the “Medical Services” and “Medical Community Care” accounts to be used for veterans medical care and makes those funds available until expended.

The bill includes section 215 allowing veterans who reside in Alaska to obtain medical services from medical facilities supported by the Indian Health Service or tribal organizations, and provides for reimbursement for those services from VA.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 216 allowing the Department to transfer the proceeds received from the transfer of real property deposited into the VA Capital Asset Fund to the major and minor construction appropriations accounts and makes those funds available until expended.

The bill includes section 217 providing that no funds may be used to prohibit Directors of the VISNs from conducting outreach or marketing programs. The Administration proposed to delete this provision.

The bill includes section 218 requiring the Secretary to submit quarterly reports to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the financial status of the Veterans Health Administration. The Administration proposed to delete this provision.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 219 prohibiting the Department from transferring more than ten percent of the total Information Technology appropriation to or from the Information Technology account and requires the Department to receive approval from the Committees on Appropriations before such transfer. The Administration proposal to modify this provision is not adopted.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 220 permitting the transfer of \$274,731,000 appropriated for medical accounts, minor construction, and information technology systems to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund for the operation of facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 221 permitting the transfer of \$280,802,000 of fiscal year 2018 advance funding appropriated for

medical accounts to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund for the operation of facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 222 permitting the transfer of funds deposited in the Medical Care Collections Fund to the Joint Medical Facility Demonstration Fund for facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 223 directing that a minimum of \$15,000,000 shall be transferred from the four medical care appropriations to the Department of Defense/Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, to be available until expended.

The bill includes section 224 requiring the Secretary to notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings when identified in Major Construction projects that total at least \$5,000,000 or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project. The Administration proposal to delete this provision is not adopted.

The bill includes section 225 prohibiting the original scope of work for a Major Construction project from being increased above the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress unless approved by the Committees. The budget request proposed to delete this provision.

The bill includes section 226 identifying the maximum funding that may be obligated for VHA VistA Evolution and electronic health record interoperability activities. The budget request proposed to delete this provision.

The bill includes section 227 requiring advance written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more full-time equivalent staff from one organizational unit to another. The budget request proposed to delete this provision.

The bill includes section 228 requiring the Secretary to provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed \$2,000,000. The budget request proposed to delete this provision.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 229 permitting the transfer to "Medical Services" from any discretionary program except "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration" upon approval of both Appropriations Committees. This provision is intended to give VA flexibility as it administers the changes to its traditional health care program and the Choice Act. The budget request to modify this provision is not adopted.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 230 permitting the transfer of funds between the “Board of Veterans Appeals” and “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” upon approval of both Appropriations Committees. The budget request to modify this provision is not adopted.

The bill includes section 231 prohibiting the reprogramming of funds exceeding \$5,000,000 among the major construction projects unless both Appropriations Committees approve the request. The budget request proposed to delete this provision.

(RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 232 rescinding \$30,000,000 of unobligated balances within the “DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund”.

(RESCISSIONS OF FUNDS)

The bill includes section 233 which rescinds Medical Care advance funding and section 234 which reduces funding in current year-funded accounts to incorporate assumed absorption of the proposed 1.6 percent payraise. The Department has authority to use whatever appropriated funds are available to support the payraise if it chooses to do so.

The bill includes section 235 requiring the Secretary to ensure that the toll-free suicide hotline provides immediate assistance from a trained professional and adheres to all requirements of the American Association of Suicidology.

The bill includes section 236 requiring the Secretary to treat a marriage and family therapist as qualified to serve in VA if the therapist meets certain educational and licensing requirements.

The bill includes section 237 directing that none of the funds in the Act may be used to pay a performance award under section 5384 of title 5, United States Code.

The bill includes section 238 prohibiting the use of funds to end or relocate hospital-based services of a VA healthcare facility that is the subject of an environmental impact statement; designated as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service; and located in a highly rural area.

The bill does not include section 224 as requested to provide additional transfer authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE III

RELATED AGENCIES

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

The recommendation includes \$75,100,000 for Salaries and Expenses of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), as requested.

The Committee notes that ABMC was provided with \$30,000,000 in the Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations Act to support large, planned projects such as the Manila Visitor Center, adequate and

appropriate security at ABMC sites, significant repairs and refurbishing, and interpretive work supporting the World War I centennial. The Committee approves the spend plan for these funds provided by the Secretary and requires regular updates on the progress of the projects and a report on obligation of the funds.

The Committee recognizes the critical work of ABMC to preserve commemorative and historical sites, and to educate the public about the United States Armed Forces. The Committee further recognizes the critical role that African Americans and other minorities played during World War II. The Committee urges the ABMC to partner with Department of Defense historians to ensure that these servicemembers and support staff are properly recognized at ABMC sites. Further, the Committee directs the ABMC to appropriately incorporate the contributions that African Americans and other minorities made into ABMC's interpretive exhibits and on the ABMC website.

FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

The recommendation includes such sums as necessary for the Foreign Currency Fluctuations Account. It is not expected that additional funds will be required for fiscal year 2017 due to favorable exchange rates.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

The recommendation includes \$30,945,000 for Salaries and Expenses for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, as requested.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

The agreement provides \$70,800,000 for Salaries and Expenses for Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), as requested. The Committee appreciates ANC's emphasis on acquisition improvements, including training, certification and workforce hiring, to improve procurement and accountability. The Committee notes that \$8,716,000 was provided in the Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations Act to address deferred maintenance and infrastructure repairs at Arlington National Cemetery and a spend plan for use of those funds was required within 30 days of enactment. The spend plan has not been officially submitted and therefore the Committee repeats the requirement so that it can determine if the plan is acceptable.

ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME TRUST FUND

The recommendation includes \$64,300,000 for the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH), which is the same as the total amount requested, although \$22,000,000 of the total is provided from a different source than requested. The Committee notes that there are major challenges for the near and long-term sustainability of the Trust Fund, which was created to provide all resources required for operations and expenses of the two AFRH locations. The Trust

Fund is replenished from a variety of sources, including fines and forfeitures and Active Duty Withholding. However, the largest source of funds, which is derived from fines and forfeitures, is diminishing. Annual outlays for the Fund have exceeded revenues since 2011, and in November 2015 the Department of Defense and AFRH officials informed the Committee that, counter to the assumptions in the fiscal year 2016 budget request, the Trust Fund balances were not sufficient to support the expenses of AFRH; therefore, the Fund was projected to be insolvent by April 2016. As an emergency measure to assure solvency for AFRH, in the Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations Act, AFRH was provided with \$20,000,000 from the General Fund.

Although AFRH and the Department of Defense (DOD) were directed by Congress to develop an approach that will replenish the Trust Fund in a sustainable, reliable manner and to present that approach to the Congress in the President's Request for fiscal year 2017, along with legislative proposals, the Administration did not do so. Instead, the budget request for AFRH for Fiscal Year 2017 includes an indefinite transfer from the Department of Defense Operations and Maintenance account, which the Committee does not support. AFRH's budget request notes that DOD has commissioned a study of AFRH operations to include benchmarking and potential legislative changes to revise AFRH's funding model. The Committee requests further information from DOD regarding the study, including a report on its cost, scope of work, deliverables, and timeline not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

The Committee again asserts that the use of the General Fund is a not a long-term solution, and AFRH is directed to work with DOD to develop an alternative during fiscal year 2017, to be included in the fiscal year 2018 budget request. In addition, AFRH is directed to report quarterly to the Committee on the Trust Fund balance, receipts and expenditures, and the progress of its efforts to lease property at the Washington, D.C. facility, starting not later than 30 days after enactment of this Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

The bill includes two provisions that were in effect in fiscal year 2016. The administrative provisions included in the bill are as follows:

The bill includes section 301 permitting Arlington National Cemetery to provide funds to Arlington County to relocate a water main.

The bill includes section 302 permitting funds from concessions at Army National Military Cemeteries to be used to support activities at the Cemeteries.

TITLE IV
OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	\$- - -
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	172,449,000
Committee recommendation in the bill	172,000,000
Comparison with:	
Fiscal year 2016 enacted level	172,000,000
Fiscal year 2017 budget request	(449,000)

The Committee recommendation includes Overseas Contingency Operations for military construction projects, unspecified minor construction and planning and design related to the Global War on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism Support, and European Reassurance Initiative projects as requested in the fiscal year 2017 Overseas Contingency Operations budget request.

Planning and Design.—The Committee is providing the planning and design as requested. However, the Committee directs that any future planning and design funds in fiscal year 2018 and beyond are to be requested as part of the base request. The Committee further directs the Secretary of Defense to submit 10 U.S.C. 2807 notifications to the congressional defense committees prior to obligation of the funds.

Unspecified Minor Construction.—The Committee is providing the \$5,000,000 as requested by the Joint Staff in Military Construction Defense-Wide. The Committee directs the Chief of the Joint Staff to submit to the congressional defense committees a spend plan for the \$5,000,000 and 10 U.S.C. 2805 notifications prior to obligation of any of the funds.

Counter-Terrorism support.—The Committee is providing the \$8,551,000 within Military Construction, Air Force for planning and design of an undetermined project in the Levant. The Committee is concerned that requesting funding for an undetermined project, as well as inadequate planning and design of three percent of the expected total cost rather than ten percent, is not an appropriate practice by the Department of Defense. The Committee therefore directs the Department of Defense to provide a spend plan for the \$8,551,000 and 10 U.S.C. 2807 notifications prior to obligation of any of the funds.

Overseas Contingency Operations Future Year Defense Program.—The Committee is concerned that funding requested for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) does not follow the same process as the Department of Defense (DOD) process for planning, programming, budgeting and execution of funds required to support military operations, readiness, infrastructure and military force modernization. Further, the projects requested as part of OCO do not have the associated planning and design or future year defense program. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary of Defense to provide to the congressional defense committee a future year defense program for OCO projects beginning with fiscal year 2015 and each subsequent year in which military construction funds have been or are to be requested in an OCO budget submission not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

The Committee recommendation includes \$18,900,000 for Army military construction planning and design for a European Reassurance Initiative project.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

The Committee recommendation includes \$59,809,000 for Navy and Marine Corps military construction and planning and design for Overseas Contingency Operations and European Reassurance Initiative projects.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

The Committee recommendation includes \$88,291,000 for Air Force military construction and planning and design for Overseas Contingency Operations, Counter-Terrorism, and European Reassurance Initiative projects.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE

The Committee recommendation includes \$5,000,000 for Defense-Wide unspecified minor construction for the Joint Staff for the European Reassurance Initiative.

TITLE V

GENERAL PROVISIONS

The bill includes 14 provisions—12 provisions that are effective in fiscal year 2016 and two new provisions as follows:

The bill includes section 501 prohibiting the obligation of funds beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided.

The bill includes section 502 prohibiting the use of funds for programs, projects or activities not in compliance with Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

The bill includes section 503 encouraging all departments and agencies funded in this Act to expand the use of “E-Commerce” technologies and procedures.

The bill includes section 504 specifying the Congressional committees that are to receive all reports and notifications.

The bill includes section 505 prohibiting the transfer of funds to any instrumentality of the United States Government without authority from an appropriations Act.

The bill includes section 506 prohibiting any funds in this Act to be used for a project or program named for an individual serving as a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the United States House of Representatives.

The bill includes section 507 requiring all reports submitted to the Congress to be posted on official websites of the submitting agency.

The bill includes section 508 prohibiting the use of funds to establish or maintain a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography, except for law enforcement investigation, prosecution or adjudication activities.

The bill includes section 509 prohibiting the use of funds for payment of first-class travel by an employee of the executive branch.

The bill includes section 510 prohibiting the use of funds in this Act for any contract where the contractor has not complied with E-Verify requirements.

The bill includes section 511 prohibiting the use of funds in this Act by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purchase or lease of a new vehicle except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

The bill includes section 512 prohibiting the use of funds in this Act for the renovation, expansion, or construction of any facility in the United States, its territories or possessions, for the purpose of housing any individual who has been detained at the United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The bill includes a new provision, section 513, to allow unobligated balances of amounts appropriated for the Ebola outbreak to be available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Zika virus.

The bill includes a new provision, section 514 establishing a “Spending Reduction Account” in the bill.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The following items are included in accordance with various requirements of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is a statement of general performance goals and objectives for which this measure authorizes funding:

The Committee on Appropriations considers program performance, including a program’s success in developing and attaining outcome-related goals and objectives, in developing funding recommendations.

RESCISSIONS

Pursuant to clause 3(f)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following table lists the rescissions in the accompanying bill:

DEPARTMENT/ACTIVITY	AMOUNTS RECOMMENDED FOR RESCISSION
Department of Defense, Military Construction, Army (Sec. 125) ...	25,000,000
Department of Defense, Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps (Sec. 126)	51,848,000
Department of Defense, Defense-Wide (Sec. 127)	37,377,000
42 USC 3374 (Sec. 133)	25,000,000
NATO Security Investment Program (Sec. 135)	30,000,000
DOD–VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund (Sec. 232)	30,000,000
Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Services (Sec. 233)	266,760,000
Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Support and Compliance (Sec. 233)	52,031,000
Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Facilities (Sec. 233)	18,591,000

TRANSFER OF FUNDS

Pursuant to clause 3(f)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted describing the transfer of funds provided in the accompanying bill.

Language is included to allow for the transfer of funds from Family Housing, Construction accounts to the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund and funds from Military Construction accounts to the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund.

Language is included to provide transfer authority from the BRAC account to the Homeowners Assistance Program.

Language is included to allow the transfer of expired funds to the "Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense" account.

Language is included to transfer not to exceed \$17,224,000 in fiscal year 2018 from Compensation and Pensions to General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration and Information Technology Systems. These funds are for the administrative costs of implementing cost-savings proposals required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 and the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1992. Language is also included transferring funds to the medical care collections fund to augment funding of medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners.

Language is included to permit the transfer of funds from General Administration to General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration.

Language is included to permit \$7,246,181,000 to be derived from the Medical Care accounts to become available for Medical Community Care for fiscal year 2017.

Language is included to permit the transfer of funds between Information Technology Systems development projects and among the three sub-accounts identified in bill language subject to the approval of the Committee.

Language is included to provide authority for the Department of Veterans Affairs for any funds appropriated in 2017 for Compensation and Pensions, Readjustment Benefits, and Veterans Insurance and Indemnities to be transferred among those three accounts.

Language is included to transfer funds among the Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance, and Medical Facilities accounts.

Language is included to permit the funds from three life insurance funds to be transferred to General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration and Information Technology Systems for the costs of administering such programs.

Language is included to permit up to \$51,200,000 to be transferred to General Administration and Information Technology Systems from any funds appropriated in fiscal year 2017 to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management and the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication for services provided.

Language is included to transfer certain funds derived from enhanced-use leasing activities to the Construction, Major Projects and Construction, Minor Projects accounts.

Language is included to transfer funds from the Medical Care Collections Fund to the Medical Services account.

Language is included to allow the transfer of funds from the Capital Asset Fund to the Construction, Major Projects and Construction, Minor Projects accounts.

Language is included to allow the transfer of funds from various accounts to the Information Technology Systems account in an aggregate amount not to exceed ten percent of the account appropriation, subject to approval by the Committee.

Language is included to allow the transfer of funds in fiscal years 2017 and 2018 provided for the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund.

Language is included permitting funds deposited to the Medical Care Collections Fund for health care provided at a combined Federal medical facility to be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund.

Language is included under the Department of Veterans Affairs that would transfer no less than \$15,000,000 for the DOD/VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code.

Language is included that permits the transfer from all discretionary accounts except General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration, to Medical Services, subject to approval by the Committee.

Language is included that permits transfer of funds between General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans Appeals, subject to approval by the Committee.

DISCLOSURE OF EARMARKS AND CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING ITEMS

Neither the bill nor the report contains any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

CHANGES IN APPLICATION OF EXISTING LAW

Pursuant to clause 3(f)(1)(A) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted describing the effect of provisions in the accompanying bill that directly or indirectly change the application of existing law.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to continue ongoing activities that require annual authorization or additional legislation, which to date have not been enacted.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to place limitations on the use of funds in the bill or change existing limitations and which might, under some circumstances, be construed as changing the application of existing law.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to allow the Secretary of Defense to exceed certain limitations upon notification to the Committee.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to allow funding to be used for official reception and representation expenses.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to enable various appropriations to remain available for more than one year for

some programs for which the basic authority legislation does not presently authorize such extended availability.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to permit the transfer of funds to other accounts.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit payments for cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contracts under certain circumstances.

Language is included in various parts of the bill to allow funds to be used for the hire of passenger motor vehicles.

Language is included under Title I to allow advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of funds to begin construction of new bases without specific appropriations.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of funds for purchase of land or land easements under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of funds for land acquisition, site preparation, and utility installation for family housing unless funds have been made available in annual appropriations Acts.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of minor construction funds to transfer an activity between installations without prior notification.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of funds for the procurement of steel for any activity if American steel producers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurements.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of funds to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the use of funds to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification.

Language is included under Title I to limit the use of funds for architect and engineer contracts under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to limit the use of funds for awarding contracts to foreign contractors under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to require the Department of Defense to notify the appropriate committees of Congress of any proposed military exercises under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to allow prior year construction funding to be available for currently authorized projects.

Language is included under Title I to allow payment for the cost associated with supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on family housing or military construction projects that are being completed with expired or lapsed funds.

Language is included under Title I to allow funds to be expended on military construction projects for four fiscal years after enactment under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to allow construction funds to be transferred to Housing Improvement Funds.

Language is included under Title I to allow for the transfer of BRAC funds to the Homeowners Assistance Program.

Language is included under Title I to limit funds for the operation and maintenance of family housing to those provided in this

appropriation and to limit amounts expended on repairs of general and flag officer quarters under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I to allow funds in the Ford Island Improvement Account to be available until expended for certain purposes.

Language is included under Title I to allow for the transfer of expired funding to the Foreign Currency Fluctuation Account under certain circumstances.

Language is included under Title I limiting movement of an Army unit with a testing mission.

Language is included under Title I to allow for transfer of funds among projects and activities in accordance with reprogramming guidelines.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit funds to be used for projects at Arlington Cemetery.

Language is included under Title I defining the congressional defense committees.

Language is included under Title I to prohibit the closure or realignment of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

Language is included under Title II to require that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs establish a priority for treatment of veterans who are service-connected disabled, lower income, or have special needs.

Language is included under Title II to require that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs give priority funding of basic medical benefits to priority groups 1 through 6.

Language is included under Title II to allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to dispense prescription drugs from VHA facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions.

Language is included under Title II providing for the reimbursement to the Department of Defense for the costs of overseas employee mail.

Language is included under Title II to require approval of a transfer between development, modernization, and enhancement projects in the Information Technology Systems account.

Language is included under Title II restricting the use of funding for VistA Evolution or any successor electronic health record system until the Secretary certifies that the Department has met multiple conditions regarding the development, cost, schedule and interoperability of such a system.

Language is included under Title II restricting the availability of funding for Major Construction projects in excess of \$100,000,000 until VA enters into an agreement with an appropriate non-VA Federal entity to serve as the design and/or construction agent for the project.

Language is included under Title II establishing time limitations and reporting requirements concerning the obligation of Major Construction funds, limiting the use of funds, and allowing the use of funds for program costs.

Language is included under Title II to allow Minor Construction funds to be used to repair non-medical facilities damaged by natural disaster or catastrophe.

Language is included under Title II permitting transfers between mandatory and discretionary accounts, limiting and providing for the use of certain funds, funding administrative expenses associ-

ated with life insurance programs from excess program revenues, allowing reimbursement from enhanced-use leases and for certain services, requiring notification of construction bid savings, limiting reprogramming amount major construction projects, restricting changes in the scope of major construction projects, requiring disclosure of insurance and income information, allowing a recovery audit collection program, allowing veterans in the State of Alaska to use Indian Health Service facilities under certain conditions, allowing medical services funds for recreational and funeral expenses, and requiring notification of organizational changes that transfer 25 or more employees from one VA organizational unit to another.

Language is included under Title II requiring the Secretary to maintain certain requirements in operating the toll-free suicide hotline.

Language is included under Title II permitting marriage and family therapists who meet certain requirements to be eligible for VA employment.

Language is included under Title II prohibiting funds from being used to end, suspend, or relocate hospital-based services in a health care facility that is the subject of an environmental impact statement, is designated as a national historic landmark, and is in a highly rural area.

Language is included under Title III United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Salaries and Expenses, to permit the use of funds for a pro bono program.

Language is included under Title III Cemeterial Expenses, Army, Salaries and Expenses, to permit the use of funds for parking maintenance and repairs.

Language is included under Title III Armed Forces Retirement Home to permit payment from the general fund of the Treasury to the Trust Fund.

Language is included under Title III to permit the use of funds to relocate a water main.

Language is included under Title III to allow for the use of concession fees.

Language is included under Title V to limit the use of funds for Federal entities when they are not in compliance with Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

Language is included under Title V to limit the use of funds for publicity or propaganda designed to support or defeat legislation pending before Congress.

Language is included under Title V to prohibit the use of funds for a project or program named for a serving Member of the United States Congress.

Language is included under Title V prohibiting funds from being used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

Language is included under Title V prohibiting funds from being used to pay for first class travel in violation of federal regulations.

Language is included under Title V prohibiting funds from being used to execute a contract for goods or services where a contractor has not complied with Executive Order 12989.

Language is included under Title V prohibiting funds from being used by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purchase or lease of a new vehicle except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

Language is included under Title V prohibiting the use of funds for renovation, expansion, or construction of a facility in the United States to house any individual who has been detained at the United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Language is included under Title V allowing unobligated balances of amounts appropriated for the Ebola outbreak to be available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Zika virus.

APPROPRIATIONS NOT AUTHORIZED BY LAW

Pursuant to clause 3(f)(1)(B) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following table lists the appropriations in the accompanying bill which are not authorized by law for the period concerned:

[dollars in thousands]

Agency/program	Last year of authorization	Authorization level	Appropriations in last year of authorization	Appropriations in this bill
Military Construction, Army.....	2016	697,745	663,245	503,459
Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps.....	2016	1,635,429	1,669,239	1,021,580
Military Construction, Air Force.....	2016	1,375,785	1,389,185	1,398,758
Military Construction, Defense-Wide.....	2016	2,300,767	2,242,867	2,024,643
Military Construction, Army National Guard.....	2016	248,538	197,237	232,930
Military Construction, Air National Guard.....	2016	129,638	138,738	143,957
Military Construction, Army Reserve.....	2016	147,795	113,595	68,230
Military Construction, Navy Reserve.....	2016	36,078	36,078	38,597
Military Construction, Air Force Reserve.....	2016	57,221	65,021	188,950
North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program.....	2016	120,000	135,000	177,932
Family Housing Construction, Army.....	2016	99,695	108,695	200,735
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Army.....	2016	393,511	375,611	325,995
Family Housing Construction, Navy and Marine Corps.....	2016	16,541	16,541	94,011
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Navy and Marine Corps.....	2016	353,036	353,036	300,915
Family Housing Construction, Air Force.....	2016	160,498	160,498	61,352
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Air Force.....	2016	331,232	331,232	274,429
Family Housing Construction, Defense-Wide.....	2016	-	-	-
Family Housing Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide.....	2016	58,668	58,668	59,157
Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund.....	2016	-	-	3,258
Homeowners Assistance Program.....	2016	-	-	-
Chemical Demilitarization Construction, Defense-Wide.....	2016	-	-	-
Base Realignment and Closure Account.....	2016	251,334	266,334	
Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Services for Homeless Families..	2016	300,000	300,000	300,000
Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Caregiver program.....	2016	625,000	622,466	724,628
Dept. of Veterans Affairs, VA-DoD Joint Incentive Fund.....	2016	15,000	15,000	15,000
Dept. of VA, VA-DoD Medical Facility Demo Fund.....	2016	*	267,521	274,731
Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Major Construction.....	done each yr.	---	---	528,110
Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Major Leases.....	done each yr.	---	---	52,064
Cemeterial Expenses, Army.....	2016	70,800	79,516	70,800
Armed Forces Retirement Home.....	2016	64,300	64,300	64,300

* amount determined jointly by DOD and VA

PROGRAM DUPLICATION

No provision of this bill establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

DIRECTED RULE MAKING

The bill does not direct any rule making.

FULL COMMITTEE VOTES

Pursuant to the provisions of clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the House of Representatives, the results of each roll call vote on an amendment or on the motion to report, together with the names of those voting for and those voting against, are printed below:

ROLL CALL NO. 1

Date: April 13, 2016

Measure: Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill, FY 2017

Motion by: Mr. Rogers

Description of Motion: To allow unobligated balances of amounts appropriated for the Ebola outbreak to be available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Zika virus.

Results: Adopted 30 yeas to 20 nays.

Members Voting Yea

Mr. Aderholt
 Mr. Amodei
 Mr. Calvert
 Mr. Carter
 Mr. Cole
 Mr. Crenshaw
 Mr. Culberson
 Mr. Dent
 Mr. Diaz-Balart
 Mr. Fleischmann
 Mr. Fortenberry
 Mr. Frelinghuysen
 Ms. Granger
 Mr. Graves
 Dr. Harris
 Ms. Herrera Beutler
 Mr. Jenkins
 Mr. Jolly
 Mr. Joyce
 Mr. Palazzo
 Mr. Rigell
 Mrs. Roby
 Mr. Rogers
 Mr. Rooney
 Mr. Simpson
 Mr. Stewart
 Mr. Valadao
 Mr. Womack
 Mr. Yoder
 Mr. Young

Members Voting Nay

Mr. Bishop
 Mr. Cuellar
 Ms. DeLauro
 Mr. Farr
 Mr. Honda
 Mr. Israel
 Ms. Kaptur
 Mr. Kilmer
 Ms. Lee
 Mrs. Lowey
 Ms. McCollum
 Ms. Pingree
 Mr. Price
 Mr. Quigley
 Ms. Roybal-Allard
 Mr. Ruppertsberger
 Mr. Ryan
 Mr. Serrano
 Mr. Visclosky
 Ms. Wasserman Schultz

COMPLIANCE WITH RULE XIII, CL. 3(e) (RAMSEYER RULE)

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets):

SECTION 223 OF THE MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

(Public Law 114–113; division J)

[(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)]

[SEC. 223. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs which become available on October 1, 2016, for “Medical Services”, “Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Medical Facilities”, up to \$265,675,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 3571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110–417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense-Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.]

COMPARISON WITH THE BUDGET RESOLUTION

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a)(1)(A) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the following table compares the levels of new budget authority provided in the bill with the appropriate allocation under section 302(b) of the Budget Act.

[In millions of dollars]

	302(b) Allocation		This bill	
	Budget authority	Outlays	Budget authority	Outlays
Mandatory	101,433	101,074	101,433	¹ 101,074
Discretionary	81,643	82,988	81,643	82,988
General Purpose	81,471	82,987	81,471	82,987
Overseas Contingency Operations	172	1	172	1

¹ Includes outlays from prior-year authority.

FIVE-YEAR PROJECTION OF OUTLAYS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a)(1)(B) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the following table contains five-year projections prepared by the Congressional Budget Office of outlays associated with the budget authority provided in the accompanying bill:

[Millions]

	Non-OCO	OCO
Outlays:		
2017	² 109,744	1
2018	4,762	43
2019	3,359	66
2020	2,105	40
2021 and future years	1,358	10

² Excludes outlays from prior-year budget authority.

ASSISTANCE TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a)(1)(C) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the amount of financial assistance to State and local governments is as follows:

Budget Authority	<i>Millions</i> ³ 181
Fiscal Year 2017 outlays resulting therefrom	33

³ Excludes outlays from prior-year budget authority.

STATE LIST

The following is a complete listing, by title, State and country, of the Committee's recommendations for military construction and family housing projects, including Overseas Contingency Operations projects:

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE
ALASKA		
ARMY		
FORT WAINWRIGHT		
UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE HANGAR.....	47,000	47,000
AIR FORCE		
CLEAR AFS		
FIRE STATION.....	20,000	20,000
EIELSON AFB		
F-35A ADAL FIELD TRAINING DETACHMENT FAC.....	22,100	22,100
F-35A AIRCRAFT WEATHER SHELTER (SQD 2).....	82,300	---
F-35A AIRCRAFT WEATHER SHELTERS (SQD 1).....	79,500	79,500
F-35A EARTH COVERED MAGAZINES.....	11,300	11,300
F-35A HANGAR/PROPULSION MX/DISPATCH.....	44,900	44,900
F-35A HANGAR/SQUAD OPS/AMU SQ #2.....	42,700	42,700
F-35A MISSILE MAINTENANCE FACILITY.....	12,800	12,800
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON		
ADD/ALTER AWACS ALERT HANGAR.....	29,000	29,000
DEFENSE-WIDE		
CLEAR AFS		
LONG RANGE DISCRIM RADAR SYS COMPLEX PH1.....	155,000	155,000
FORT GREELY		
MISSILE DEFENSE COMPLEX SWITCHGEAR FACILITY.....	9,560	9,560
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON		
CONSTRUCT TRUCK OFFLOAD FACILITY.....	4,900	4,900
ARIZONA		
NAVY		
YUMA		
VMX-22 MAINTENANCE HANGAR.....	48,355	48,355
AIR FORCE		
LUKE AFB		
F-35A SQUAD OPS/AIRCRAFT MAINT UNIT #5.....	20,000	20,000
DEFENSE-WIDE		
FORT HUACHUCA		
JITC BUILDING 52110 RENOVATION.....	4,493	4,493
CALIFORNIA		
ARMY		
CONCORD		
ACCESS CONTROL POINT.....	12,600	12,600
NAVY		
CORONADO		
COASTAL CAMPUS ENTRY CONTROL POINT.....	13,044	13,044
COASTAL CAMPUS UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE.....	81,104	81,104
GRACE HOPPER DATA CENTER POWER UPGRADES.....	10,353	10,353
LEMOORE		
F-35C ENGINE REPAIR FACILITY.....	26,723	26,723
SAN DIEGO		
ENERGY SECURITY HOSPITAL MICROGRID.....	6,183	---
SEAL BEACH		
MISSILE MAGAZINES.....	21,007	21,007
AIR FORCE		
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE		
FLIGHTLINE FIRE STATION.....	24,000	24,000
DEFENSE-WIDE		
CORONADO		
SOF HUMAN PERFORMANCE TRAINING CENTER.....	15,578	15,578
SOF SEAL TEAM OPS FACILITY.....	47,290	47,290
SOF SEAL TEAM OPS FACILITY.....	47,290	47,290
SOF SPECIAL RECON TEAM ONE OPERATIONS FAC.....	20,949	20,949
SOF TRAINING DETACHMENT ONE OPS FACILITY.....	44,305	44,305
TRAVIS AFB		
REPLACE HYDRANT FUEL SYSTEM.....	26,500	26,500

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

NAVY		
BARKING SANDS		
UPGRADE POWER PLANT & ELECTRICAL DISTRIB SYS.....	43,384	43,384
KANEHOE BAY		
REGIMENTAL CONSOLIDATED COMM/ELEC FACILITY.....	72,565	72,565
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
HILO		
COMBINED SUPPORT MAINTENANCE SHOP.....	31,000	31,000
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM		
F-22 COMPOSITE REPAIR FACILITY.....	11,000	11,000
IOWA		
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
DAVENPORT		
NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER.....	23,000	23,000
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
SIOUX GATEWAY AIRPORT		
CONSTRUCT CONSOLIDATED SUPPORT FUNCTIONS.....	12,600	12,600
KANSAS		
AIR FORCE		
MCCONNELL AFB		
AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER.....	11,200	11,200
KC-46A ADAL TAXIWAY DELTA.....	5,600	5,600
KC-46A ALTER FLIGHT SIMULATOR BLDGS.....	3,000	3,000
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
FORT LEAVENWORTH		
NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER.....	29,000	29,000
LOUISIANA		
AIR FORCE		
BARKSDALE AFB		
CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATION FACILITY.....	21,000	21,000
NAVY RESERVE		
NEW ORLEANS		
JOINT RESERVE INTELLIGENCE CENTER.....	11,207	11,207
MAINE		
NAVY		
KITTERY		
UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING.....	17,773	17,773
UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS FOR NUCLEAR PLATFORMS.....	30,119	30,119
DEFENSE-WIDE		
KITTERY		
MEDICAL/DENTAL CLINIC REPLACEMENT.....	27,100	27,100
MARYLAND		
NAVY		
PATUXENT RIVER		
CBARS RDT&E HANGAR.....	40,576	40,576
AIR FORCE		
JOINT BASE ANDREWS		
21 POINTS ENCLOSED FIRING RANGE.....	13,000	13,000
PAR RELOCATE JADOC SATELLITE SITE.....	3,500	3,500
DEFENSE-WIDE		
BETHESDA NAVAL HOSPITAL		
MEDCEN ADDITION/ALTERATION INCR 1.....	50,000	50,000
FORT MEADE		
ACCESS CONTROL FACILITY.....	21,000	21,000
NSAW CAMPUS FEEDERS PHASE 3.....	17,000	17,000
NSAW RECAPITALIZE BUILDING #2 INCR 2.....	195,000	195,000

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE
MASSACHUSETTS		
AIR FORCE		
HANSCOM AFB		
SYSTEM MANAGEMENT ENGINEERING FACILITY.....	20,000	20,000
MINNESOTA		
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
DULUTH IAP		
LOAD CREW TRAINING/WEAPON SHOPS.....	7,600	7,600
MISSOURI		
DEFENSE-WIDE		
ST LOUIS		
LAND ACQUISITION-NEXT NGA WEST (N2W) CAMPUS.....	801	---
MONTANA		
AIR FORCE		
MALMSTROM AFB		
MISSILE MAINTENANCE FACILITY.....	14,600	14,600
NEVADA		
NAVY		
FALLON		
AIR WING SIMULATOR FACILITY.....	13,523	13,523
AIR FORCE		
NELLIS AFB		
F-35A POL FILL STAND ADDITION.....	10,600	10,600
NEW HAMPSHIRE		
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
HOOKSETT		
NATIONAL GUARD VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SHOP.....	11,000	11,000
ROCHESTER		
NATIONAL GUARD VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SHOP.....	8,900	8,900
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
PEASE INTERNATIONAL TRADE PORT		
KC-46A INSTALL FUSELAGE TRAINER BLDG 251.....	1,500	1,500
NEW MEXICO		
AIR FORCE		
CANNON AFB		
NORTH FITNESS CENTER.....	21,000	21,000
HOLLOMAN AFB		
HAZARDOUS CARGO PAD AND TAXIWAY.....	10,600	10,600
KIRTLAND AFB		
COMBAT RESCUE HELICOPTER (CRH) SIMULATOR.....	7,300	7,300
NEW YORK		
NAVY RESERVE		
BROOKLYN		
ELECTRIC FEEDER DUCTBANK.....	1,964	1,964
SYRACUSE		
MARINE CORPS RESERVE CENTER.....	13,229	13,229
NORTH CAROLINA		
NAVY		
CAMP LEJEUNE		
RANGE FACILITIES SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS.....	18,482	18,482
CHERRY POINT MARINE CORPS AIR STATION		
CENTRAL HEATING PLANT CONVERSION.....	12,515	12,515
DEFENSE-WIDE		
CAMP LEJEUNE		
DENTAL CLINIC REPLACEMENT.....	31,000	31,000
FORT BRAGG		
SOF COMBAT MEDIC TRAINING FACILITY.....	10,905	10,905

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE
SOF PARACHUTE RIGGING FACILITY.....	21,420	21,420
SOF SPECIAL TACTICS FACILITY (PH3).....	30,670	30,670
SOF TACTICAL EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE FACILITY.....	23,598	23,598
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
CHARLOTTE/DOUGLAS IAP		
C-17 CORROSION CONTROL/FUEL CELL HANGAR.....	29,600	29,600
C-17 TYPE III HYDRANT REFUELING SYSTEM.....	21,000	21,000
AIR FORCE RESERVE		
SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB		
KC-46A ADAL BLDG FOR AGE/FUSELAGE TRAINING.....	5,700	5,700
KC-46A ADAL SQUADRON OPERATIONS FACILITIES.....	2,250	2,250
KC-46A TWO BAY CORROSION/FUEL CELL HANGAR.....	90,000	90,000
OHIO		
AIR FORCE		
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB		
RELOCATED ENTRY CONTROL FACILITY 26A.....	12,600	12,600
OKLAHOMA		
AIR FORCE		
ALTUS AFB		
KC-46A FTU/FTC SIMULATOR FACILITY PH 2.....	11,600	11,600
TINKER AFB		
KC-46A DEPOT SYSTEM INTEGRATION LABORATORY.....	17,000	17,000
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
ARDMORE		
NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER.....	22,000	22,000
PENNSYLVANIA		
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
YORK		
NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER.....	9,300	9,300
AIR FORCE RESERVE		
PITTSBURGH IAP		
C-17 ADAL FUEL HYDRANT SYSTEM.....	22,800	22,800
C-17 CONST/OVERLAY TAXIWAY AND APRON.....	8,200	8,200
C-17 CONSTRUCT TWO BAY CORROSION/FUEL HANGAR.....	54,000	54,000
RHODE ISLAND		
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
EAST GREENWICH		
NATIONAL GUARD/RESERVE CENTER BUILDING (JFHQ).....	20,000	20,000
SOUTH CAROLINA		
NAVY		
BEAUFORT		
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE HANGAR.....	83,490	83,490
PARRIS ISLAND		
RECRUIT RECONDITIONING CENTER & BARRACKS.....	29,882	29,882
DEFENSE-WIDE		
JOINT BASE CHARLESTON		
CONSTRUCT HYDRANT FUEL SYSTEM.....	17,000	17,000
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
MCENTIRE ANG		
REPLACE OPERATIONS AND TRAINING FACILITY.....	8,400	8,400
TEXAS		
ARMY		
FORT HOOD		
AUTOMATED INFANTRY PLATOON BATTLE COURSE.....	7,600	7,600
AIR FORCE		
JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO		
BMT RECRUIT DORMITORY 6.....	67,300	67,300

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

DEFENSE-WIDE		
RED RIVER ARMY DEPOT		
CONSTRUCT WAREHOUSE & OPEN STORAGE.....	44,700	44,700
SHEPPARD AFB		
MEDICAL/DENTAL CLINIC REPLACEMENT.....	91,910	91,910
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
ELLINGTON FIELD		
CONSOLIDATE CREW READINESS FACILITY.....	4,500	4,500
NAVY RESERVE		
GALVESTON		
RESERVE CENTER ANNEX.....	8,414	8,414
UTAH		
ARMY		
CAMP WILLIAMS		
LIVE FIRE EXERCISE SHOOTHOUSE.....	7,400	7,400
AIR FORCE		
HILL AFB		
649 MUNS MUNITIONS STORAGE MAGAZINES.....	6,600	6,600
649 MUNS PRECISION GUIDED MISSILE MX FACILITY.....	8,700	8,700
649 MUNS STAMP/MAINT & INSPECTION FACILITY.....	12,000	12,000
COMPOSITE AIRCRAFT ANTENNA CALIBRATION FAC.....	7,100	7,100
F-35A MUNITIONS MAINTENANCE COMPLEX.....	10,100	10,100
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
CAMP WILLIAMS		
NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER.....	37,000	37,000
VERMONT		
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
BURLINGTON IAP		
F-35 BEDDOWN 4- BAY FLIGHT SIMULATOR.....	4,500	4,500
VIRGINIA		
ARMY		
FORT BELVOIR		
SECURE ADMIN/OPERATIONS FACILITY, INCR 2.....	64,000	64,000
AIR FORCE		
JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS		
AIR FORCE TARGETING CENTER.....	45,000	45,000
FUEL SYSTEM MAINTENANCE DOCK.....	14,200	14,200
DEFENSE-WIDE		
PENTAGON		
PENTAGON METRO ENTRANCE FACILITY.....	12,111	12,111
UPGRADE IT FACILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE-RRMC.....	8,105	8,105
ARMY RESERVE		
DUBLIN		
ORGANIZATIONAL MAINTENANCE SHOP/AMSA.....	6,000	6,000
WASHINGTON		
NAVY		
BANGOR		
SERVICE PIER ELECTRICAL UPGRADES.....	18,939	18,939
SUBMARINE REFIT MAINT SUPPORT FACILITY.....	21,476	21,476
BREMERTON		
NUCLEAR REPAIR FACILITY.....	6,704	6,704
WHIDBEY ISLAND		
EA-18G MAINTENANCE HANGAR.....	45,501	45,501
TRITON MISSION CONTROL FACILITY.....	30,475	30,475
AIR FORCE		
FAIRCHILD AFB		
PIPELINE DORM, USAF SERE SCHOOL (150 RM).....	27,000	27,000

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

WISCONSIN		
ARMY RESERVE		
FORT MCCOY		
AT/MOB DINING FACILITY.....	11,400	11,400
WYOMING		
AIR FORCE		
F. E. WARREN AFB		
MISSILE TRANSFER FACILITY BLDG 4331.....	5,550	5,550
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
LARAMIE		
NATIONAL GUARD READINESS CENTER.....	21,000	21,000
AUSTRALIA		
AIR FORCE		
DARWIN		
APR - AIRCRAFT MX SUPPORT FACILITY.....	1,800	1,800
APR - EXPAND PARKING APRON.....	28,600	28,600
CUBA		
ARMY		
GUANTANAMO BAY		
MIGRATION COMPLEX IMPROVEMENTS.....	33,000	33,000
DIEGO GARCIA		
DEFENSE-WIDE		
DIEGO GARCIA		
IMPROVE WHARF REFUELING CAPABILITY.....	30,000	30,000
GERMANY		
ARMY		
EAST CAMP GRAFENWOEHR		
TRAINING SUPPORT CENTER.....	22,000	22,000
GARMISCH		
DINING FACILITY.....	9,600	9,600
WIESBADEN ARMY AIRFIELD		
CONTROLLED HUMIDITY WAREHOUSE.....	16,500	16,500
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL STORAGE BUILDING.....	2,700	2,700
AIR FORCE		
RAMSTEIN AB		
37 AS SQUADRON OPERATIONS/AIRCRAFT MAINT UNIT.....	13,437	13,437
SPANGDAHLEM AB		
EIC - SITE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE.....	43,465	43,465
DEFENSE-WIDE		
KAISERLAUTERN AB		
SENBACH ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL REPLACEMENT.....	45,221	45,221
RHINE ORDNANCE BARRACKS		
MEDICAL CENTER REPLACEMENT INCR 6.....	58,063	58,063
GUAM		
NAVY		
JOINT REGION MARIANAS		
HARDENING OF GUAM POL INFRASTRUCTURE.....	26,975	26,975
POWER UPGRADE - HARMON.....	62,210	62,210
AIR FORCE		
JOINT REGION MARIANAS		
APR - MUNITIONS STORAGE IGLOOS, PH 2.....	35,300	35,300
APR - SATCOM C4I FACILITY.....	14,200	14,200
BLOCK 40 MAINTENANCE HANGAR.....	31,158	31,158
JAPAN		
NAVY		
KADENA AB		
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE COMPLEX.....	26,489	26,489

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE
SASEBO		
SHORE POWER (JULIET PIER).....	16,420	16,420
AIR FORCE		
KADENA AB		
APR - REPLACE MUNITIONS STRUCTURES.....	19,815	19,815
YOKOTA AB		
C-130J CORROSION CONTROL HANGAR.....	23,777	23,777
CONSTRUCT COMBAT ARMS TRAINING & MAINT FAC.....	8,243	8,243
DEFENSE-WIDE		
IWAKUNI		
CONSTRUCT TRUCK OFFLOAD & LOADING FACILITIES.....	6,664	6,664
KADENA AB		
KADENA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPLACEMENT.....	84,918	84,918
MEDICAL MATERIEL WAREHOUSE.....	20,881	20,881
SOF MAINTENANCE HANGAR.....	42,823	42,823
SOF SIMULATOR FACILITY (MC-130).....	12,602	12,602
YOKOTA AB		
AIRFIELD APRON.....	41,294	41,294
HANGAR/AMU.....	39,466	39,466
OPERATIONS AND WAREHOUSE FACILITIES.....	26,710	26,710
SIMULATOR FACILITY.....	6,261	6,261
KWAJALEIN		
DEFENSE-WIDE		
KWAJALEIN ATOLL		
REPLACE FUEL STORAGE TANKS.....	85,500	85,500
MARIANA ISLANDS		
AIR FORCE		
UNSPECIFIED LOCATION		
APR - LAND ACQUISITION.....	9,000	9,000
SPAIN		
NAVY		
ROTA		
COMMUNICATION STATION.....	23,607	23,607
TURKEY		
AIR FORCE		
INCIRLIK AB		
AIRFIELD FIRE/CRASH RESCUE STATION.....	13,449	13,449
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES		
AIR FORCE		
AL DHAFRA		
LARGE AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE HANGAR.....	35,400	35,400
UNITED KINGDOM		
AIR FORCE		
CROUGHTON RAF		
JIAC CONSOLIDATION - PH 3.....	53,082	53,082
MAIN GATE COMPLEX.....	16,500	16,500
DEFENSE-WIDE		
CROUGHTON RAF		
CROUGHTON ELEM/MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL REPLACEMENT.....	71,424	71,424
ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH		
CONSTRUCT HYDRANT FUEL SYSTEM.....	13,500	13,500
WAKE ISLAND		
DEFENSE-WIDE		
WAKE ISLAND		
TEST SUPPORT FACILITY.....	11,670	11,670

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

VARIOUS WORLDWIDE LOCATIONS		
NAVY		
TRITON FORWARD OPERATING BASE HANGAR.....	41,380	41,380
NATO SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM.....	177,932	177,932
WORLDWIDE UNSPECIFIED		
ARMY		
HOST NATION SUPPORT.....	18,000	18,000
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	25,000	25,000
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	80,159	80,159
NAVY		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	88,230	88,230
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	29,790	29,790
AIR FORCE		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	84,862	84,862
PLANNING AND DESIGN - ANDREWS AFB.....	18,720	18,720
PLANNING AND DESIGN - HANSCOM AFB.....	40,000	40,000
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	30,000	30,000
DEFENSE-WIDE		
CONTINGENCY CONSTRUCTION.....	10,000	---
ENERGY CONSERVATION INVESTMENT PROGRAM.....	150,000	150,000
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
DEFENSE WIDE.....	23,450	23,450
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEPENDENT EDUCATION.....	23,585	23,585
DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY.....	27,660	27,660
MDA.....	---	15,000
NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.....	71,647	36,000
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.....	24,000	24,000
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND.....	27,653	27,653
WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS SERVICE.....	3,427	3,427
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SUBTOTAL, PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	776,183	745,536
UNSPECIFIED MINOR CONSTRUCTION		
DEFENSE-WIDE.....	3,000	3,000
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEPENDENT EDUCATION.....	3,000	3,000
DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY.....	8,500	8,500
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.....	8,631	8,631
MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY.....	2,414	2,414
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.....	3,913	3,913
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND.....	5,994	5,994
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SUBTOTAL, UNSPECIFIED MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	35,452	35,452
ARMY NATIONAL GUARD		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	8,729	8,729
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	12,001	12,001
AIR NATIONAL GUARD		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	10,462	10,462
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	17,495	17,495
ARMY RESERVE		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	7,500	7,500
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	2,830	2,830
NAVY RESERVE		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	3,783	3,783
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	---	---

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

AIR FORCE RESERVE		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	4,500	4,500
MINOR CONSTRUCTION.....	1,500	1,500
FAMILY HOUSING, ARMY		
KOREA		
CAMP WALKER (DAEGU)		
FAMILY HOUSING NEW CONSTRUCTION (90 UNITS).....	54,554	54,554
CAMP HUMPHRIES		
FAMILY HOUSING NEW CONSTRUCTION (216 UNITS).....	143,563	143,563
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	2,618	2,618
SUBTOTAL, CONSTRUCTION.....	200,735	200,735
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE		
UTILITIES ACCOUNT.....	55,428	55,428
SERVICES ACCOUNT.....	7,993	7,993
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT.....	40,344	40,344
MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNT.....	400	400
FURNISHINGS ACCOUNT.....	10,178	10,178
LEASING.....	131,761	131,761
MAINTENANCE OF REAL PROPERTY.....	60,745	60,745
PRIVATIZATION SUPPORT COSTS.....	19,146	19,146
SUBTOTAL, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.....	325,995	325,995
FAMILY HOUSING, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS		
GUAM		
NSA ANDERSON		
REPLACEMENT HOUSING PHASE I.....	78,815	78,815
JAPAN		
IWAKUNI		
CONSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENTS (36 UNITS).....	11,047	11,047
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	4,149	4,149
SUBTOTAL, CONSTRUCTION.....	94,011	94,011
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE		
UTILITIES ACCOUNT.....	56,685	56,685
SERVICES ACCOUNT.....	12,855	12,855
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT.....	51,291	51,291
MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNT.....	364	364
FURNISHINGS ACCOUNT.....	17,457	17,457
LEASING.....	54,689	54,689
MAINTENANCE OF REAL PROPERTY.....	81,254	81,254
PRIVATIZATION SUPPORT COSTS.....	26,320	26,320
SUBTOTAL, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.....	300,915	300,915
FAMILY HOUSING, AIR FORCE		
JAPAN		
KADENA (CAMP FOSTER)		
CONSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENTS (NORTH TOWERS).....	52,307	52,307
KADENA		
CONSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENTS (KADENA HEIGHTS).....	4,179	4,179

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

SPAIN		
MORON AB		
CONSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENTS (UNITS 650 AND 658).....	498	498
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	4,368	4,368
SUBTOTAL, CONSTRUCTION.....	61,352	61,352

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE		
UTILITIES ACCOUNT.....	37,241	37,241
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT.....	42,919	42,919
SERVICES ACCOUNT.....	13,026	13,026
FURNISHINGS ACCOUNT.....	31,690	31,690
MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNT.....	1,745	1,745
LEASING.....	20,530	20,530
MAINTENANCE.....	85,469	85,469
PRIVATIZATION SUPPORT COSTS.....	41,809	41,809
SUBTOTAL, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.....	274,429	274,429

FAMILY HOUSING, DEFENSE-WIDE		
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE		
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY		
UTILITIES.....	367	367
FURNISHING.....	399	399
LEASING.....	11,044	11,044
MAINTENANCE OF REAL PROPERTY.....	800	800
DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY		
UTILITIES.....	4,100	4,100
FURNISHINGS.....	500	500
LEASING.....	40,984	40,984
DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY		
UTILITIES.....	174	174
FURNISHINGS.....	20	20
SERVICES.....	32	32
MANAGEMENT.....	388	388
MAINTENANCE OF REAL PROPERTY.....	349	349
SUBTOTAL, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.....	59,157	59,157

DOD FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND.....	3,258	3,258
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE ACCOUNT.....	205,237	230,237

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY.....	---	40,500
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS.....	---	293,600
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE.....	---	26,000
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD.....	---	67,500
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD.....	---	---
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE.....	---	86,500
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE.....	---	---

RESCISSIONS FROM PRIOR YEAR UNOBLIGATED BALANCES		
ARMY.....	---	-25,000
NAVY AND MARINE CORPS.....	---	-51,848
AIR FORCE.....	---	---
DEFENSE-WIDE.....	---	-37,377
AIR NATIONAL GUARD.....	---	---
42 USC 3374 (SEC. 133).....	---	-25,000
NATO SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (SEC. 135).....	---	-30,000

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE

FY 2017 OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS		
OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS		
WORLDWIDE UNSPECIFIED		
NAVY		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	1,000	1,000
AIR FORCE		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	940	940
DJIBOUTI		
NAVY		
CAMP LEMONIER		
MEDICAL/DENTAL FACILITY.....	37,409	37,409
AIR FORCE		
CHABELLEY AIRFIELD		
ACCESS ROAD.....	3,600	3,600
PARKING APRON AND TAXIWAY.....	6,900	6,900
EUROPEAN REASSURANCE INITIATIVE		
BULGARIA		
AIR FORCE		
GRAF IGNATIEVO		
SQUADRON OPERATIONS/OPERATION ALERT FACILITY.....	3,800	3,800
FIGHTER RAMP EXTENSION.....	7,000	7,000
UPGRADE MUNITIONS STORAGE.....	2,600	2,600
ESTONIA		
AIR FORCE		
AMARI AB		
BULK FUEL STORAGE.....	6,500	6,500
GERMANY		
AIR FORCE		
SPANGDAHLEM AB		
HIGH CAPACITY TRIM PAD AND HUSH HOUSE.....	1,000	1,000
F/A-22 LOW OBSERVABLE/COMPOSITE REPAIR FACILITY.....	12,000	12,000
F/A-22 UPGRADE		
INFRASTRUCTURE/COMMUNICATIONS/UTILITIES.....	1,600	1,600
UPGRADE HARDENED AIRCRAFT SHELTERS FOR F/A-22.....	2,700	2,700
UPGRADE MUNITION STORAGE DOORS.....	1,400	1,400
ICELAND		
NAVY		
KEFLAVIK		
P-8A AIRCRAFT RINSE FACILITY.....	5,000	5,000
P-8A HANGAR UPGRADE.....	14,600	14,600
LITHUANIA		
AIR FORCE		
SIAULIAI		
MUNITIONS STORAGE.....	3,000	3,000
POLAND		
AIR FORCE		
LASK AIR BASE		
SQUADRON OPERATIONS FACILITY.....	4,100	4,100
POWIDZ		
SQUADRON OPERATIONS FACILITY.....	4,100	4,100

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST	HOUSE
ROMANIA		
AIR FORCE		
CAMP TURZII		
MUNITIONS STORAGE AREA.....	3,000	3,000
SQUADRON OPERATIONS FACILITY.....	3,400	3,400
TWO-BAY HANGAR.....	6,100	6,100
EXTEND PARKING APRONS.....	6,000	6,000
WORLDWIDE UNSPECIFIED		
ARMY		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	18,900	18,900
NAVY		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	1,800	1,800
DEFENSE-WIDE		
UNSPECIFIED MINOR CONSTRUCTION		
THE JOINT STAFF.....	5,000	5,000
COUNTER-TERRORISM SUPPORT		
WORLDWIDE UNSPECIFIED		
AIR FORCE		
PLANNING AND DESIGN.....	9,000	8,551

MINORITY VIEWS

The fiscal year 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies appropriations bill funds critical military construction, family housing and quality of life improvements and enhancements for our brave men and women in uniform and their families. This bill provides \$81.6 billion in total discretionary funding. This is \$1.8 billion above the 2016 enacted funding level but \$1.2 billion below the FY 2017 budget request.

The bill funds military construction at \$5.6 billion, which is \$120 million below the FY 2017 request. For Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs, the bill provides \$73.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$2.1 billion above the FY 2016 enacted level but \$1.4 billion below the President's request. The recommendation also includes the budget request of \$66.3 billion in discretionary funds for the FY 2018 advance appropriations for VA medical services. The bill includes \$75.1 million for our heroes who have made the ultimate sacrifice and are honored in the battle monuments and cemeteries funded in this bill.

We are pleased that the bill continues to build on efforts to end the veterans claims backlog that began in fiscal year 2014. First, the Committee bill continues both the aggressive monthly reporting requirements from each specific regional office on claims processing performance as well as quarterly reports on remediation efforts at the poorest performing regional offices. Second, the bill provides \$180 million for the paperless claims processing system, \$153 million for digital scanning of health records, and \$27 million for centralized mail. Finally, the bill provides \$156 million, a \$46 million increase over the fiscal year 2016 level, for the Board of Veterans Appeals to support 242 new staff to tackle claims appeals, which have been ballooning as the number of claims decisions has increased.

The bill continues to closely track the VA's development of its electronic health record (EHR) system and fences off a portion of the funding until certain information is provided to the Committee. We believe that the fencing language is especially important for FY 2017 as VA has indicated it will change direction on the development of this platform. In addition, the bill continues the practice started in 2013 to require the VA to provide information on the VistA Evolution system before funding is released. The Committee does not intend to delay the progress of modernizing VistA but believes continuing close oversight is necessary to ensure that the modernization effort will have the necessary capabilities to provide superior care.

We are also pleased that the bill provides the full FY 2017 budget request of \$7.8 billion for mental health programs, of which \$164 million will be available for suicide prevention outreach. In addition to the robust funding levels, language to address the Veterans

Crisis Line will have a meaningful impact on our Nation's veterans when they are most vulnerable. Furthermore, the report addresses the mental health needs of female veterans, who are six times more likely to commit suicide than women in the general population. This bill takes positive steps to deal with this alarming trend.

While there are numerous measures to praise in the bill, some shortcomings will have to be addressed. The inclusion of bill language indiscriminately denying performance awards is one example. This language does not distinguish between high-quality executives and the supervisors and managers at facilities where the Inspector General identified the use of inappropriate scheduling practices. In the long-term, denying SES bonus pay to high-performing executives will compound the very problem it attempts to address. It will make it significantly harder for the VA to recruit and retain quality executive leaders. The talented individuals that the VA needs to hire to solve problems for our nation's veterans will be more inclined to take positions where employees in good standing, achieving desired results, can be rewarded.

ADDRESSING THE ZIKA CRISIS

On February 22, 2016, the Administration requested that Congress provide nearly \$1.9 billion to combat the spread of the Zika virus. Nearly seven weeks later, the Republican majority of Congress has not taken up the Administration's request, even as the summer months approach and the threat of Zika infected mosquitoes continue to grow in the continental United States.

Americans should have confidence their government is doing all it can to protect its citizens from the harmful effects of this terrible virus. Scientists no longer have doubts that Zika is a cause of microcephaly, a serious birth defect that can result in miscarriage and disability or death of a child. In addition, scientists continue to study the connection of Zika and Guillain-Barre, a neurological condition that causes paralysis. Funding is needed to not only respond to this virus, but to fully understand its effects.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of April 13, 2016, travel-associated Zika cases stand at 358 in the United States. Thirty-one of those cases are pregnant women. In US territories, there are 471 cases of locally acquired virus and four travel-associated cases. Fifty-eight of those cases are pregnant women. It is unconscionable to continue to do nothing as these numbers continue to grow.

During the first Committee meeting of the year, Committee Democrats attempted to address the threat of the Zika virus by offering an amendment to fund the Administration's request of nearly \$1.9 billion. The amendment offered by full Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey, along with subcommittee ranking members Rosa DeLauro and Debbie Wasserman Schultz, would have funded prevention, detection, and response to the Zika virus as well as additional research, development, and procurement of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. The Republican majority blocked that effort through a procedural vote that denied providing additional funds for a Zika response and reneged on America's commitment to continue to fight Ebola even as cases have resurfaced in Africa.

The Republicans' logic is to promote an inadequate response to both Zika and Ebola by syphoning resources from Ebola response to partially fund a Zika response. We must confront Zika immediately with dedicated resources for CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. U.S. efforts to keep Ebola at bay in Africa must not be weakened as we increase response to the Zika virus in the Americas.

We must be prepared to respond to both public health crises.

CONCLUSION

There is much to praise in the Military Construction VA bill though several items in the bill weaken our support. Moreover, Democrats will find it difficult to support individual FY 2017 appropriations bills such as this one until it is clear that Congress will provide needed resources in FY 2016 to respond to the Zika virus.

NITA M. LOWEY.
SANFORD D. BISHOP, Jr.

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

During consideration of the 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, the Committee recklessly adopted the Rogers amendment that redirected the funding Congress provided to respond to Ebola public health emergency to the emerging threat posed by the Zika virus. This is unwise and places American lives at risk.

CDC has pledged to use this funding to support up to 30 poor and developing countries to improve their public health infrastructure. If we abandon this commitment, which has helped secure billions in funding from other countries, our partners in will certainly follow suit. Improving the public health infrastructure around the world makes Americans safer by preventing future epidemics like Ebola and Zika from spiraling out of control. It is shortsighted and irresponsible for us to shift these funds to another crisis.

Instead Congress should immediately pass an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to support our response to the Zika virus. The Administration requested an emergency appropriation of \$1.9 billion to face the Zika threat. Unfortunately, the administration has already been forced to rob nearly \$600 million from Ebola to respond to Zika. This is dumbfounding. The Ebola crisis is not over. These funds are being directed away from other-critical and threatening global health risks and are being repurposed only as a last resort—not because it is the right thing to do from a policy perspective.

Democrats offered the Lowey-DeLauro-Wasserman Schultz amendment, which would have fully funded the Administration's request.

We must immediately fund the Administration's request and invest in stopping the Zika virus. This past month, Dr Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said the following about Zika "Everything we see is bad. Every week, every month it tends to surprise us. There was no reason to think that it would be this bad."

Just this week Brazilian scientists and researchers uncovered a concerning links between the Zika virus and serious brain issues—Guillain Barre Syndrome and ADEM. Guillain Barre causes the immune system to attack the nerves, and can lead to paralysis. ADEM causes swelling in the brain and spinal cord and presents such similar symptoms to multiple sclerosis that many doctors cannot distinguish between the two. As Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put it, "Everything we look at with this virus seems to be a bit scarier than we initially thought."

Zika is already infecting travelers returning to the United States, and is even being transmitted sexually—so men, as well as women, are at risk. We are about to send hundreds of American athletes

to Rio for the Olympics, and thousands more will attend as spectators.

The Zika virus has already wreaked havoc across Latin America. In areas affected by Zika, we have seen thousands of babies born with microcephaly—a rare neurological condition characterized by incomplete brain development and an infant’s head being significantly smaller than the heads of other children. One of the mosquitos that transmits Zika is found in 30 U.S. states where millions of babies are born each year.

In the Gulf Coast states of the U.S.—Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida—where large concentrations of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito—the primary carrier of the Zika virus—are found, there were 783,000 births in 2014. Along the Gulf Coast, temperatures are already reaching the 80s in the afternoon. By May and June, these areas will begin to see these mosquitoes in larger numbers.

Even Senator Marco Rubio said this week: “the Zika virus is impacting Florida, [Puerto Rico, and South America] and we must be prepared for what is predicted to be an even more explosive outbreak.”

We need to immediately fund our response effort. What will happen to our blood supply when Zika transmission increases as more and more mosquitoes are born in the U.S. this summer? We need to reduce the population of Zika-carrying mosquitoes; we need to ensure the safety of the blood supply; and we need to enhance laboratory capacity and surveillance data. We need to develop advanced diagnostics to test more rapidly and accurately for Zika, and we need to develop a Zika vaccine.

Congress needs to act immediately to protect millions of pregnant women and newborns from this serious threat. I urge my colleagues to oppose the inclusion of the Rogers Amendment in the 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

ROSA L. DELAURO.

