

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JEFF MILLER
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

March 1, 2010

- **Thank you Chairman Lungren and Ranking Member Brady for this opportunity to appear before your committee to discuss the Committee on Veterans' Affairs budget for the 112th Congress. Ranking Member Bob Filner joins me here today in support of the Committee's request.**
- **As you know, the Committee has oversight over the Department of Veterans Affairs. VA is the second largest federal agency, employing nearly 300,000 with a current budget of roughly \$125 billion dollars.**

- **The committee has an aggressive plan of action and is already engaged in oversight in several of the many areas included in its Oversight Plan, including:**
 - **Ensuring proper implementation of new law pertaining to veterans' caregivers;**
 - **Assessing the effectiveness of programs aimed at helping veterans locate and retain post-service employment;**
 - **Ensuring the highest-quality treatment and care, while preserving patient safety;**
 - **Employing effective and efficient use of Information Technology to improve the delivery of care and services, and more.**

- **The VA Committee’s total budget request for the 112th Congress of just under \$7.3 million represents the move toward spending restraint that is required in these times, but will allow us the capability to hire and retain top-notch professional staff to assist Committee members as we pursue this aggressive oversight plan in support of our nation’s most treasured assets: its veterans.**
- **The Committee’s request allows us to work toward the goal of ensuring that the nation’s veterans, and their family members and survivors who access the VA, receive the highest quality of care and services.**
- **We hope you will look favorably on our disciplined request.**

Travel:

- **Travel funds will provide a start toward the Committee performing oversight over some of the 1,000 VA hospitals, outpatient clinics, nursing homes, national cemeteries and regional benefits processing offices within the VA system. Our request for travel funds is extremely modest, and is the same figure requested in the previous Congress.**
 - **Mr. Chairman, you may or may not be aware that the vast majority of the Committee travel in which our Members engage is funded by VA, the very agency over which we are charged with oversight. I have some concerns about the functionality of this arrangement in some instances, and would welcome the opportunity to visit with you about that.**

Equipment:

- **The Committee's request for equipment funds is one-third of what was requested in the 111th Congress. In an effort at efficiency, the Committee will only make major purchases when absolutely necessary. Additionally, computer software will be purchased on an as-needed basis in order to maintain House technical standards.**

Staffing:

- **This budget submission assumes the maintenance of the current staff ceiling number of 36. Administratively, the Majority and the Minority will maintain the long-standing two-thirds to one-third resources policy, with the Minority controlling its own payroll budget.**

Closing:

- **Mr. Chairman, this is a small Committee charged with awesome responsibility: oversight of those who care and provide services for, our nation's warriors, and their families.**
- **We are committed to working efficiently to ensure that VA delivers on its mission: to care for those who have borne the battle, and their widows and orphans.**
- **Mr. Chairman, I take great pride in the privilege of having served on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs since coming to Congress, and it is now my honor to lead as Chairman. You have my assurance that we will account for, and stretch, every dollar afforded us as we out-stride the expectations placed upon us.**
- **I am happy to answer any questions you have.**