



April 25, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy:

On behalf of the 1.5 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliary, a significant number of whom rely on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and benefits, we write to express our grave concerns with the proposed reports of returning to Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) funding levels for the federal government and its potential effects on veterans' programs. Congress has championed monumental advancements in veteran care and benefits in the past few years and we believe we need to continue pushing forward instead of taking steps backward in serving our veterans.

Plainly stated, the *Honoring our PACT Act of 2022* did not exist when funding levels were set for FY 2022. The VFW is gravely concerned the *Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023* missed the mark by not protecting the advances in care and benefits for toxic-exposed veterans. This could set our collective hard work back years and make veterans once again have to fight for the care and benefits they have earned.

Through *PACT Act* reforms, we believe we are on the cusp of resolving many issues that have plagued VA for decades, thanks to the years of hard work from veteran advocates around the country, as well as our faithful supporters in the past few Congresses and across multiple Presidential Administrations. Military Toxic Exposure claim denials, VA processing backlogs, hiring delays, and unacceptable appointment wait times will hopefully be a thing of the past, and we will once again be able to point to VA as a world-class provider of healthcare and benefits. These advancements will fade away if they are not resourced properly, which is why the VFW believes returning funding levels to FY22 would likely jeopardize the care and benefits our nation's veterans have earned.

Bills aiming to return the budget to FY22 funding levels, without explicitly securing care and benefit programs for veterans are intolerable to our organization. The service members, veterans, and families we represent have seen the true cost of more than 20 years of war, and it is unacceptable to ask them to now pay the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the VFW understands your goal of fiscal responsibility, but we respectfully ask that in the context of *Limit, Save, Grow*, that you provide explicit assurances on how Congress will continue to properly invest in VA programming – specifically, the reforms authorized through the *PACT Act*. The members of the VFW and our Auxiliary hope you will continue to honor the promise made to the men and women who served our country by reinforcing your long-standing support of those who stood in harm's way. Returning VA to FY22 funding levels will negatively affect millions of Americans across the country and we look forward to working with you to make sure this does not happen.

Sincerely,

RYAN M. GALLUCCI
Executive Director
VFW Washington Office

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org