Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2007

Office of the Senate Majority Leader
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

We write today to ask you to keep the Senate in session the week of October 8, to help pass this years' veterans appropriations. Now that we are already into the new fiscal year, it is imperative that the House and Senate reach a prompt agreement on the conference report on the FY2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act (H.R. 2642).

It is unfortunate the Senate has been unable to act upon many of its Constitutionally mandated appropriations bills. While the House continues to wait upon the Senate to complete its work, we call upon you to quickly move veterans appropriations through conference so a final version of the bill may be passed and presented to the President. We believe that veterans issues rise above the partisan divisions of Washington which is evident by the passage of the FY08 MilCon-Veterans appropriations with overwhelming majorities in both Houses, 501-3 combined.

The Senate cannot allow this critically important funding to continue to fall victim to the usual partisan wrangling which occurs all too often in Washington. If tragedies such as the recent revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center are to be diverted in the future, we must pass veterans funding now. From FY 2001 the total VA budget rose from $48 billion to approximately $70 billion in FY 2006, a 46 percent increase. This year, the House voted to increase funding by $6 billion dollars over FY07, one of the largest in the 77 year history of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Because we have asked so much of or brave men and women in uniform during the War on Terror we must uphold our commitment to veterans upon their return home.

Earlier in the year, the new Majority agreed they would continue the trend of significant increases in veterans funding begun by the Republican Congress. We ask you to honor that agreement and see the commitment we made to our veterans is upheld.

We must never forget the sacrifice of our veterans. As members of Congress, we have a solemn obligation to fulfill our promises to them. We ask you to look past the heightened partisanship of our times and unite us on this issue by making it a first priority to bring a stand-alone veterans appropriations bill through conference so the Congress may present the President with a bill no later than October 12, 2007.

Sincerely,

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Jim Sensenbrenner | John T. Doolittle | Dan Burton

Wally Herger | Linda Sánchez | Phil English

J. Saxton | Jeff Miller | Randy Kuhl

John Klink | Scott Garrett | Greg Walden

Geoff Davis | Paul Ryan | John Duncan

Tom Tancredo | Adrian Smith | Jim Moran

Louie Gohmert | Ken Calvert | Thomas Price

Ginny Brown-Waite | Mike Ferguson | John Carter

Doug Lamborn | Jim Walberg | Tom Feeney

Daniel Lungren | Jean Schmidt | Phil Gingrey

		Wayne T. Gilchrest
	John E. Peterson	Michael T. McCaul
		Thelma Drake

cc: Sen. Mitch McConnell
Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Republican Leader John Boehner