

FACT SHEET: Supporting Veterans and Military Families

The President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget demonstrates that we can make critical investments to strengthen the middle class, create jobs, and grow the economy while further reducing the deficit in a balanced way. The budget details how we can make these investments to strengthen the middle class, equip our people with the skills they need, and support our veterans and military families – without adding a dime to the deficit.

We have a sacred trust with those who serve and protect our nation. It's a commitment that begins at enlistment, and it must never end. That's why President Obama is committed to ensuring that veterans can find work when they return home, receive the health care and benefits they've earned and have the chance to get a college education through VA's education benefit programs, such as the post-9/11 GI Bill. As our servicemen and women return home from war, now more than ever we must fulfill our duty to them.

To honor their service and support America's veterans and military families, the FY2014 Budget will:

- **Increase Funding for VA to Meet Increasing Needs.** The Budget provides \$63.5 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a 4.0 percent increase over the 2013 enacted amount, in order to meet the increased needs of the Nation's veterans. This funding level maintains the Administration's commitment to veterans, providing the resources to help transform the Department and better serve veterans and their families.
- **Improve Services to Veterans.** The Budget requests \$2.5 billion, 13.6 percent increase, for the Veterans Benefits Administration given the high priority of improving services to Veterans.
 - This includes \$155 million for the implementation of a new paperless claims processing system. These funds will allow VA to move away from its reliance on paper records, thereby improving the speed and efficiency of claims processing while simultaneously enhancing the security of veterans' personal information.
 - This also includes \$136 million for a Veterans Claims Intake Program that will allow VA to directly receive and convert paper evidence, such as medical records, into a digital format for increased efficiency in claims processing.
- **Strengthen Mental Health Care Services.** The Budget provides nearly \$7 billion, a 7.2 percent increase above the 2013 enacted level, to continue VA's focus on expanding and transforming mental health services for veterans to ensure accessible and patient-centered care, including treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Military Sexual Trauma. This funding will allow VA to continue its collaborative efforts with the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Health and Human Services, as directed in the President's executive order on mental health for veterans, servicemembers, and military families, to help veterans receive timely access to mental health services, including through enhanced partnerships with community providers.
- **Incentivizing Employers to Hire Veterans through Permanent Tax Credits:** The Administration continues its support of tax credits that will help employ veterans. The Budget proposes to permanently extend the Returning Heroes Tax Credit, which provides up to \$5,600

to employers to hire unemployed veterans, and the Wounded Warrior Tax Credit, which provides up to \$9,600 to hire long-term unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities.

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