

8/01/2008 Moran Announces House Approval of Veterans Mileage Increase, Funding for Fort Riley

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced House approval of the 2009 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (VA) Appropriations bill that will provide increased funding for veterans medical care and projects at Fort Riley. The bill will provide more than \$210 million for military construction projects at Fort Riley and a nearly \$3 billion increase in funding for veterans care, including an increase to the mileage reimbursement rate for veterans traveling to VA facilities. Moran has worked on this issue since first coming to Congress and was successful in increasing the rate last year for the first time in more than 30 years.

"Support for our nation's service men and women and veterans is a priority and this legislation ensures we continue providing the best facilities and care," Moran said. "As we work to boost veterans health care funding, it is important to be reminded that the exceptional medical services offered at the VA can only be enjoyed by veterans if veterans have access to this care. Especially with today's high gas prices, the increased mileage reimbursement will help many veterans who would not otherwise be able to afford the trip to VA facilities."

This legislation increases the travel reimbursement rate from 28.5 cents per mile to 41.5 cents per mile for veterans traveling to access VA care. Last year, the House approved Moran's amendment to raise the rate from 11 cents to 28.5 cents per mile. Also included is additional funding for fee-based services to improve access to care where VA services are not available and an increase in enrollment of Priority 8 veterans in VA medical care by 10 percent. This will begin the enrollment of this service group for the first time since 2003 and includes veterans with moderate income levels and no service-related disabilities.

The legislation also funds several Fort Riley construction projects. The projects include:

- Brigade Complex - \$79 million
- Hospital addition - \$52 million
- Battalion Complex - \$38 million
- Commissary - \$23 million
- Rail Siding - \$15 million
- Fire Station - \$3 million

The 2009 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill now awaits action by the U.S. Senate. Moran is a senior member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

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