

**Washington, DC** - The House and Senate have come to an agreement on the conference report of H.R. 3043, the Fiscal Year 2008 Labor, Health, and Human Services (LHHS), and Education Appropriations bill. The bill includes Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (MilCon-VA) appropriations and provides \$43.1 billion for Veterans, which will be the largest single budget increase in the history of the VA, highlighting Congress's commitment to honoring our service men and women. The legislation also includes language that would allocate a total of \$66 million for a new polytrauma rehabilitation center at Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital in San Antonio, TX. Construction of the new facility, the fifth VA facility of its kind in America, could be completed as early as the fall of 2009.

“This legislation's historic investment in our nation's veterans reinforces our commitment to the brave men and women who have valiantly served our country,” **said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20)**.

“The construction of San Antonio's new polytrauma facility is a genuine display of support for our troops; the investment demonstrates that this Congress will honor their service by providing quality healthcare for all our veterans,” he added.

“The House and Senate have shown their support with this bill for our troops and the next generation military leaders. As a member of the Appropriations Committee I worked closely with both Chairmen to ensure that the funding for San Antonio's projects were included 100%, and I will continue to carefully monitor these project requests through the remainder of the process,” **said Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23)**. “While President Bush has threatened to veto this Appropriations bill, I hope that he will agree that there is substantial benefit to supporting our troops by investing in military needs and veterans healthcare by signing the LHHS/MilCon-VA appropriations bill when it reaches his desk.”

Additional San Antonio area provisions in the legislation include:

- **\$18.55 million** for Fort Sam Houston, including \$1.95 million for a battle command training center, \$10.6 million for a unit operations facilities and \$6.6 million for barracks;

- **\$9 million** for Camp Bullis, including \$1.6 million for an urban assault course and \$7.4 million for a new health clinic;

- **\$130,000 for design of an Ambulatory Care Center** at Lackland Air Force Base's Wilford Hall Medical Center;

- **\$900,000 for design of a joint security forces building**, also at Lackland Air Force

Base;

- **\$5.2 million for Laughlin Air Force Base** in Del Rio for military student center & library;
  
- **\$350,000 for at risk youth programs through Baptist Child and Family Services**, who work with families in six counties on or near the border through their Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) program;
  
- **\$300,000 for construction of a new community health center in San Antonio - El Centro de Barrio through CentroMed**, which will provide comprehensive health care to 24,000 low-income and uninsured individuals;
  
- **\$75,000 for Project QUEST, Inc.**, a program that provides pre-college preparatory classes, occupational skills training, job placement, and support services to San Antonio area residents;
  
- **\$375,000 for CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children's Hospital** facilities and equipment;
  
- **\$440,000 for San Antonio Metro Health District's** Environmental Health and Wellness Center
  
- **\$212,000 for AVANCE** training and curriculum

Once passed in the House, the the LHHS/MilCon-VA legislation will move to the United States Senate for consideration.

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