

NEWS RELEASE

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Disabled Veterans Decry Wrongheaded, 'Heartless' Budget Cuts

If Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) wanted to make a name for herself by proposing to cut funding for veterans health care and disability compensation, she has succeeded. "Such an ill-advised proposal is nothing short of heartless," according to Disabled American Veterans Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman.

"It is unconscionable that while our nation is at war someone would even think of forcing our wounded warriors to sacrifice even more than they already have," Gorman said. "Their injuries and disabilities were the result of their service to the nation, and our nation must not shirk its responsibilities toward them. How do you tell a veteran who has lost a limb that he or she has not sacrificed enough? Yet Rep. Bachmann wants to do just that."

The third-term member of Congress has called on Congress to freeze Department of Veterans Affairs health care spending and reduce disability compensation. Her proposal would cut \$4.5 billion from veterans health care and disability benefits.

"Freezing VA health care funding will not only freeze out sick and disabled veterans seeking care, it will also end up costing the federal government even more money," said Gorman. "With the number of veterans seeking health care rising, the effect of a freeze would be to either block enrollment of veterans, many of them just returning from battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan, or to ration care to currently enrolled veterans, including disabled veterans who have relied on VA dating back to World War II," Gorman said.

Independent studies have shown the VA system provides safe, high quality health care at an average cost that is less than Medicare, Medicaid or the private sector. "This ill-conceived and misguided proposal by Rep. Bachmann would actually increase the budget deficit while lowering the quality of health care to our nation's veterans," he said.

"America's sick and disabled veterans will not sit idly by while their earned health care and disability benefits are threatened," Gorman warned. "We will raise our voices above the din and call on every member of Congress to reject Rep. Bachmann's heartless proposal."

The 1.2 million-member Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932, represents this nation's disabled veterans. It is dedicated to a single purpose: building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. More information is available at www.dav.org.

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