



**For Immediate Release: June 23, 2009**

## **BARROW VOTES TO REFORM, IMPROVE VETERANS HEALTH SERVICES**

**Washington, D.C.** – Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) voted today to secure timely health care funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act authorizes Congress to approve veterans medical care funding one year in advance to better anticipate, and meet the demand for, veterans health care services. The advanced funding will give the VA up to a full year to plan for the most effective and efficient way to deliver medical care to veterans. Barrow also voted to expand services for female veterans and increase veterans disability payments to reflect cost-of-living increases.

The issue of advanced funding is a top priority for veteran service organizations. Over 40 groups, including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, have come out in support of the legislation.

“The men and women who served this county deserve medical care that’s the best of the best,” said Barrow. “When politics gets in the way of timely action on the federal budget, the VA budget shouldn't get caught up in that. Budgeting a year in advance will help insulate the VA from budgetary brinkmanship, and that will make it easier to meet the medical needs of our veterans. They need and deserve full access to health care services even when Congress can't get its act together, and this'll make sure they get it.”

The Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act, also passed by the House today, addresses the specific issues faced by women veterans. It expands and improves the health care services available and works to make those services more accessible.

“These days, women soldiers serve under essentially the same conditions as their male counterparts,” added Barrow. “And women face a whole new set of issues when they return from service. The bill we passed today is a big step in the right direction toward providing better treatment and more accessible health services for our brave female veterans.”

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**Contact:** Jane Brodsky, (202) 225-2823