



Veterans Deserve Better

When Obama Addresses The VFW Today, Will He Continue To Echo The Same Failed Promises?

OBAMA HAS NOT BUILT THE "21ST CENTURY VA" HE PROMISED

Obama In 2008: "I've Pledged To Build A 21st Century VA." OBAMA: "We must also stand up for affordable health care for every single veteran. That's why I've pledged to build a 21st century VA. We need to cut through the red tape -- every service-member should get electronic copies of medical and service records upon discharge. We need to close shortfalls -- it's time to fully fund VA health care, and to add more Vet Centers. We need to get rid of means-testing - every veteran should be allowed into the VA system." (Senator Barack Obama, Remarks At 109th Annual Veterans Of Foreign Wars National Convention, Orlando, FL, 8/29/08)

Obama In 2009: "I've Pledged To Build Nothing Less Than A 21st Century VA." OBAMA: "Whether you left the service in 2009 or 1949, we will fulfill our responsibility to deliver the benefits and care that you earned. That's why I've pledged to build nothing less than a 21st-century VA." (President Barack Obama, Remarks At Annual Veterans Of Foreign Wars National Convention, Phoenix, AZ, 8/17/09)

In 2008, Obama Promised To Focus On "Revamping An Overburdened Benefits System." OBAMA: "Economic security for our veterans also depends on revamping an overburdened benefits system. I congratulate the VFW for what you've done to help veterans navigate a broken VBA bureaucracy. Now it's time for the government to do a better job. We need more workers, and a 21st century electronic system that is fully linked up to military records and the VA's health network. It's time to ensure that those who've served get the benefits that they've earned." (Senator Barack Obama, Remarks At 109th Annual Veterans Of Foreign Wars National Convention, Orlando, FL, 8/29/08)

Veterans Still Face Unacceptable Delays At The VA

Veterans Seeking Disability Compensation Are Experiencing "Staggering" Processing Delays At The VA. "The Veterans Affairs Department faces a 'staggering' backlog of 897,566 disability claims with more than 65 percent pending for more than 125 days, a problem compounded by an error rate of 16 percent, representatives of veterans' services organizations told lawmakers on the House Veterans Affairs Committee on Wednesday." (Bob Brewin, "VA's Disability Claims Backlog Pushes 900,000," [National Journal](#) 4/19/12)

- **Almost Half Of Veterans Are Forced To Wait 50 Days For Their First Mental Health Evaluation, Much Longer Than The VA Had Been Reporting.** "Federal investigators reported

Monday that nearly half of the veterans who seek mental health care for the first time waited about 50 days before receiving a full evaluation, a much longer lag-time than the Department of Veterans Affairs has been reporting. The VA has been saying that 95 percent of new patients seeking mental health treatment get a full evaluation within the department's goal of 14 days. But an inspector general's report obtained by The Associated Press said that the department's tracking is flawed and that the VA was overstating its success when it comes to how quickly veterans get care." (Kevin Freking, "Report: VA Failing To Provide Timely Mental Care," [The Associated Press](#), 4/23/12)

Almost 10 Percent Of Veterans Lack Health Care Coverage

Nearly 10 Percent, Or 1.3 Million, Of Veterans Lack Health Care Coverage According To A Study Conducted By The Urban Institute And The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "About 10 percent of U.S. veterans under the age of 65 lack health insurance and are not being cared for by the Department of Veterans Affairs, either, according to a study published on Thursday. The study estimated that 1.3 million veterans and nearly 950,000 members of their families lack health insurance. These uninsured military families account for 4.8 percent of the 47.3 million uninsured Americans, the Urban Institute and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reported." (Maggie Fox, "Study: 10 Percent Of Veterans Lack Health Insurance," [National Journal](#), 5/24/12)

Too Many Homeless Veterans Are Not Getting The Services They Need

Obama In 2009: "After Serving Their Country, No Veterans Should Be Sleeping On The Streets, No Veteran. We Should Have Zero Tolerance For That." "I've also directed Secretary Shinseki to focus on a top priority: reducing homelessness among veterans. (Applause.) After serving their country, no veterans should be sleeping on the streets -- (applause) -- no veteran. We should have zero tolerance for that." (President Barack Obama, Remarks At Annual Veterans Of Foreign Wars National Convention, Phoenix, AZ, 8/17/09)

Homelessness Among Female Veterans Has Escalated During The Past Decade. "Once primarily male veteran problems, homelessness and economic struggles are escalating among female veterans, whose numbers have grown during the past decade of U.S. wars while resources for them haven't kept up." (Eric Tucker, "More Women Vets Are Homeless, But Housing Scarce," [The Associated Press](#), 4/4/12)

- **"The Population Of Female Veterans Without Permanent Shelter Has More Than Doubled...And May Continue Climbing Now That The Iraq War Has Ended."** "The population of female veterans without permanent shelter has more than doubled in the last half-dozen years and may continue climbing now that the Iraq war has ended, sending women home with the same stresses as their male counterparts — plus some gender-specific ones that make them more susceptible to homelessness." (Eric Tucker, "More Women Vets Are Homeless, But Housing Scarce," [The Associated Press](#), 4/4/12)

Obama Has Been Criticized By His Former Law Professor Laurence Tribe And Democrat Activist Bobby Shriver For Failing To Address The Growing Population Of Homeless Veterans. "The Obama administration also faces criticism from some allies, including the president's former Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe and Kennedy family scion Bobby Shriver, for being slow to stem the growing numbers of homeless veterans. Tribe is among a group of lawyers suing the administration in an attempt to push the VA to refurbish and reopen a 400-acre shuttered shelter and rehab property in west Los Angeles." (Aamer Madhani, "Obama Campaign Lagging On Vets Support," [USA Today](#), 5/31/12)

- **Shriver: "The President Cannot Continue To Use His Administration's Efforts For Veterans As Campaign Applause Lines."** "The president cannot continue to use his administration's efforts for veterans as campaign applause lines. He instead must insist that the VA once and for all ensure

that homeless veterans with severe disabilities — in Los Angeles and across the nation — have access to stable housing linked with appropriate supportive services. Study after study has proved that this approach is not only effective, it also costs the VA far less than the consequences of not taking care of homeless and mentally ill vets. This is Obama's rhetoric: 'This country will care for our veterans and serve our veterans as well as they've served us.' Fine words. But the time for words has passed. It's time for action." (Bobby Shriver, Op-Ed, "How To House Homeless Vets," [Los Angeles Times](#), 5/28/12)

OBAMA'S BUDGET PLACES A GREATER BURDEN ON VETERANS AND THE MILITARY

Under Obama's Budget, Healthcare Costs Will Skyrocket For Military Families And Disabled Veterans

Obama's FY2013 Budget Cuts Military Health Care Funding By \$12.9 Billion Over The Next Five Years. "In the next fiscal year, the military has outlined a \$1.8 billion cut as part of a projected \$48.7 billion health care budget covering 9.6 million people. The cuts would total \$12.9 billion over five years. To offset the loss, retirees would pay higher enrollment fees based on how much they earn through their military pensions. Retirees and active-duty family members would pay more for pharmacy copayments, too." (Barrie Barber, "Military Retirees Could See Increase In Health Insurance Costs," [Dayton Daily News](#), 3/30/12)

- **"The Administration Has Proposed Increasing The Fees And Co-Pays For Retired Service Members Covered By The Military Health Care Program, TRICARE."** "With U.S. combat troops out of Iraq and a timetable set for drawing down in Afghanistan, the Pentagon is under increasing pressure to cut spending to help ease the nation's burgeoning deficit. Among other things, the administration has proposed increasing the fees and co-pays for retired service members covered by the military's health care program, TRICARE. The increases, to be phased in over four years, must be approved by Congress, which is facing the prospect of deep defense cuts already mandated by law." (Leigh Munsil, "TRICARE Cost Hikes Draw Fire," [Politico](#), 4/4/12)
- **Obama Was "Disappointed" That The House Refused To Increase TRICARE Fees In Its FY2013 Budget.** "The Administration is very disappointed that the Committee did not support the proposed TRICARE fee increases and included section 718, which, while supporting some fee increases, caps them at levels below those allowed under current law and below the requested authorization." (President Barack Obama, [Statement Of Administrative Policy, H.R. 4310 – National Defense Authorization Act For FY2013](#), 5/15/12)

Veterans' Advocates Call Increased Fees "A Significant Breach Of Faith" With Military Retirees.

"Veterans' advocates denounced the proposed increases. Retired vice admiral Norb Ryan, president of the Military Officers Association of America, called it 'a significant breach of faith with those who have already completed arduous careers of 20-30 or more years in uniform.'" (Tom Vanden Brook, "Pentagon's \$525B Budget Lists Cuts To Jets, Benefits," [USA Today](#), 2/14/12)

- **The VFW Called TRICARE Hikes "An Attempt To Balance The Budget On The Backs Of Disabled Veterans And Men And Women In Uniform."** "Still, veterans' organizations are angry at the proposed TRICARE cost increases. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, for example, panned them as an attempt to balance the budget on the backs of disabled veterans and men and women in uniform." (Leigh Munsil, "TRICARE Cost Hikes Draw Fire," [Politico](#), 4/4/12)

Military Pay Raises Will Fall Below Private Sector Levels Because Of Obama's Budget Cuts

Obama In 2008: "We Need To Make Sure That Military Pay Does Not Lag Behind The Private

Sector, So That Those Who Serve Can Raise Their Families And Live The Life They've Earned."

OBAMA: "The VFW has done an extraordinary job of standing by our military families -- helping out with everything from a phone card for a soldier who is overseas, to an extra hand around the house. As President, I will stand with you. We need a Military Families Advisory Board to identify new ways to ease the burden. We need more official support for the volunteer networks that help military spouses get by. And we need to make sure that military pay does not lag behind the private sector, so that those who serve can raise their families and live the life they've earned." (Senator Barack Obama, Remarks At 109th Annual Veterans Of Foreign Wars National Convention, Orlando, FL, 8/29/08)

But The New Defense Budget Will "Reduce Pay Raises To Below Private-Sector Levels." "The Pentagon called for retiring some planes that transport troops, including 27 C-5As and 65 C-130s. It said it planned to reduce pay raises to below private-sector levels, with troops receiving 1.7 percent raises for the next two years, followed by 0.5 percent increases in 2015 and 1 percent hikes in 2016." (Nancy Youssef, "Heaviest 2013 Defense Budget Cuts Would Fall On Troops," [McClatchy](#), 2/13/12)

OBAMA IS SITTING BY AS SEQUESTRATION THREATENS TO SLASH THE DEFENSE BUDGET EVEN MORE

"Preoccupied By His Re-Election Campaign," Obama Is "Missing In Action" While Top Defense Officials Warn Against Additional Defense Cuts. "Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey calls sequestration 'an unacceptable risk' that will 'increase the likelihood of conflict' in a world with a weaker America. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta says it's 'unworkable' and 'a disaster' that will 'hollow out the force and inflict severe damage to our national defense.' The Commander in Chief? Preoccupied by his re-election campaign since, oh, last summer, Mr. Obama is missing in action. Led by California's Buck McKeon, the House of Representatives in May adopted a plan to offset the defense and other cuts due next year with reductions elsewhere in the budget. The White House promised a veto, and Majority Leader Harry Reid won't schedule a Senate vote." (Editorial, "The Coming Defense Crack-Up," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/18/12)

- **Defense Secretary Leon Panetta Says Cuts To Defense Will Result In The "Smallest Ground Force Since 1940, The Smallest Number Of Ships Since 1915 And The Smallest Air Force In Its History."** "Defense Secretary Leon Panetta spelled out a doomsday scenario Monday that he said could occur if Congress fails to take action to avoid a \$1 trillion cut in defense spending over the next decade. Panetta, responding to a letter from Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsay Graham, said cuts of nearly \$100 billion a year would leave the United States with its smallest ground force since 1940, the smallest number of ships since 1915 and the smallest air force in its history." (David Alexander, "Panetta Spells Out Budget Cut Doomsday Fears," [Reuters](#), 11/14/11)

Sequestration Would Indiscriminately Cut Funding For The War In Afghanistan, Operations In The Persian Gulf, As Well As "Training Programs, Equipment Maintenance And Military Benefits."

"Sequestration compounds the damage because the cuts would be automatic and indiscriminate. The Pentagon now concedes that funding for the war in Afghanistan would be hit, contrary to past assurances. So would current operations in the Persian Gulf. Training programs, equipment maintenance and military benefits are affected too. Defense contractor Lockheed Martin says the law obliges it to send layoff warnings as soon as October to most of its 123,000 workers—the kind of manufacturing jobs Democrats claim to love." (Editorial, "The Coming Defense Crack-Up," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/18/12)

The Pentagon Estimated That Sequestration "Could Add 1 Percent To The Nation's Unemployment Rate." "Nearly \$1 trillion in defense cuts that the 2011 Budget Control Act could require would devastate the military and the defense industrial base, and could add 1 percent to the nation's unemployment rate,

the Pentagon press secretary said today.” (Cheryl Pellerin, “Additional Budget Cuts Would Devastate Military, Spokesman Says,” American Forces Press Service, 9/15/11)

- **Sequestration Will Reduce DOD Spending By \$56.7 Billion In 2013, Reducing U.S. GDP By \$94.5 Billion.** “The estimated decrease in federal spending with the implementation of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (spending for FY 2012 and FY 2013) will reduce DOD spending by a total of \$56.7 billion (see Table 4). This reduction in DOD spending is composed of payroll reductions totaling \$7.1 billion and procurement reductions totaling \$49.6 billion. These spending reductions would reduce U.S. gross domestic product by \$94.5 Billion.” (Stephen S. Fuller, “The Economic Impact Of The Budget Control Act Of 2011 On DOD And Non-DOD Agencies,” [Report](#), 7/17/12)

Obama Is Using The Threat Of “Draconian Defense Cuts” To Push His Political Agenda

Though He Acknowledged The Danger Of Sequestration To Military Readiness, “Obama Has Pledged To Veto Legislation Offered By House Republicans In May.” “The Obama administration, including Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, has warned about what these cuts would mean for military readiness and urged Congress to find savings elsewhere. But Mr. Obama has pledged to veto legislation offered by House Republicans in May that would roll back the military cuts using money saved by paring federal funds for food stamps, Medicaid and other social services.” (Patrick O’Connor, “Military Cuts Loom As Late Campaign Issue,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/8/12)

- **Obama: “I Will Veto Any Effort To Get Rid Of Those Automatic Spending Cuts To Domestic And Defense Spending.”** OBAMA: “Already some in Congress are trying to undo these automatic spending cuts. My message to them is simple: No. I will veto any effort to get rid of those automatic spending cuts to domestic and defense spending. There will be no easy off ramps on this one. We need to keep the pressure up to compromise, not turn off the pressure.” (President Barack Obama, Statement On The Supercommittee, [Washington, DC](#), 11/21/11)

Obama Is Attempting To “Use GOP Concerns About Defense To Bludgeon Republicans Into Accepting A Huge Tax Increase.” “Mr. Obama knows all this from his own Pentagon's warnings, so why is he inviting a crack-up? The answer is that he wants to use GOP concerns about defense to bludgeon Republicans into accepting a huge tax increase. Republicans were unwise to accept the sequestration deal while leaving entitlements off the table, thus handing Mr. Obama more leverage. But perhaps they never expected that a Commander in Chief who swore an oath to safeguard America's national security would play such a dangerous game. It's not the first time this President's political cynicism has been underestimated.” (Editorial, “The Coming Defense Crack-Up,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/18/12)

Obama: “If You Are Willing, Republicans, To Ask The Wealthy To Pay A Little Bit More, Then We Don't Have To Worry About These Draconian Defense Cuts.” OBAMA: “I do not think that, unless the sequester goes through, that you will see the kind of economic impact that some people are talking about. But I do think that it is very important to understand this debate around the sequester. Congress agreed that they want to make \$1.2 trillion worth of cuts. And a big chunk of that is defense. Now, what we’ve said is if you are willing, Republicans, to ask the wealthy to pay a little bit more then we don't have to worry about these draconian defense cuts. On the other hand, if we’re not getting any new revenues, then everybody’s going to be burdened. So what I’ve called on Congress to do is let’s make sure taxes don't go up for people who make \$250,000 a year or less. For folks like me, who can afford it, we can do a little bit more and in part that allows us to both reduce our deficit and maintain a strong military.” ([WAVY-NBC](#), 7/15/12)

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