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Dear American Legion's Veterans Policy Oversight Committee,

I have reviewed the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) report from April 30, 2013 entitled: "VA Construction, Additional Actions Needed to Decrease Delays and Lower Costs of Major Medical-Facility Projects" as well as their testimony before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee for Oversight and Investigations (O&I) entitled: "VA Construction Policy: Failed Plans Result in Plans That Fail" and I'm clearly alarmed by the chronic cost overruns and delays that are detailed in their report and subsequent testimony.

According to the GAO, the delays in hospital construction projects in Aurora, Colorado; Orlando, Florida; Las Vegas, Nevada; and New Orleans, Louisiana are, on average, 35 months behind schedule and \$336 million over budget. The new Las Vegas hospital, once thought to be completed, is already undergoing some remodeling while the Aurora, Orlando, and New Orleans construction projects all remain dramatically behind schedule and over budget. Every day that a VA major medical center passes their planned completion date unopened is a day that we are not fulfilling our obligation to our nation's veterans to provide them with the quality health care that they have earned through their service to our country and that these state-of-the-art facilities will be able to provide.

In the same GAO report that is critical of VA construction practices, the Army Corps of Engineers is referenced as having built similar major medical facilities for the Department of Defense, within their respective budgets, and on time. It is my view that the logical course of action at this time is to enact H.R. 3593, the VA Construction Assistance Act of 2013 by U.S. Representative Mike Coffman (R-CO) and Representative Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ) that would formally bring the Army Corps of Engineers in to "oversee" all remaining VA major medical projects, and I strongly encourage the American Legion to support the passage of this important legislative proposal.

Sincerely yours,



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