



## **FUNDS FOR OPERATION WELCOME HOME FACE PROPOSED \$7 MILLION CUT**

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**SACRAMENTO, CA** – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Department of California, is disappointed to hear that a legislative budget committee has voted to cut the Operation Welcome Home budget to \$1.1 million from its original proposal of \$8.4 million.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger initiated Operation Welcome Home in June by advocating increasing county veteran services to \$20 million. He approved the proposed budget of \$8.4 million for the Operation itself to offset the administrative difficulties due to the increase in Iraq and Afghanistan returnees. The VFW intended to put the money toward programs connecting returning veterans with services and monthly premiums. According to the County Veterans Service Officers Association, every dollar spent by California would be met with \$100 in federal funding.

In addition to providing assistance with filing federal forms, counseling, and other veteran services, money was also designated to help match older veterans with recent returnees to help them readjust to civilian life.

“This loss of funding is unfortunate,” said State Commander Denis Wells. “We are in the midst of two wars and face growing numbers of soldiers requiring assistance upon their return. Cutting the budget for the program now would hurt these veterans and their families at a time when they need it the most.”

The budget containing these cuts is still subject to revision and has not been passed by the legislature.

*The Veterans of Foreign Wars is America’s largest organization of combat veterans. Since its inception more than 100 years ago, the VFW has donated millions of dollars and volunteer hours, been a strong supporter of the country's youth, and of patriotic and educational efforts. The VFW has also been an unwavering advocate to the military, its veterans, and their families. Please visit [www.vfwca.org](http://www.vfwca.org) for more information on ways you can help the VFW support veterans in your community.*

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