

Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch issued the following statement in response to President Bush's just announced opposition to the funding levels contained in S. 1645, the Military Construction, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2008 and his threatened veto of other appropriations bills if funding for veterans' programs is not significantly reduced:

(In his Statement of Administrative Policy, the President threatens to "veto any of the other bills that exceed his request until Congress demonstrates a path to reach the President's topline of \$933 billion" if "Congress increases VA funding above the President's request and does not offset this increase with spending reductions in other bills." [Click here to view the full statement](#) .)

"President Bush is engaged in a shameless political maneuver that pits necessary support for veterans against critical domestic spending needs such as children's health care, affordable housing, and transportation infrastructure. At the same time, he continues to insist on a blank check to fund his failed policy in Iraq at the expense of domestic priorities.

"This President, who regularly declared his support for the troops while presiding over the scandal at Walter Reed, is now demanding that Congress reduce funding for veterans programs. Earlier this year, the House of Representatives appropriately passed the largest funding increase in Veterans Administration history, recognizing the real care our veterans need and deserve. Those increases are necessary and must take effect.

"Our veterans deserve better than to be used in a partisan political game propagated by this President."