

**NINETY-SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Charlotte, North Carolina
August 26, 27, 28, 2014**

**Resolution No. 282: Congressional Budget Office Scoring on Department of Veterans
Affairs Leasing**

Origin: Iowa

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, In the mid-1990s, Dr. Kenneth Kizer, former Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Under Secretary for Health, revolutionized the delivery of health care to our nation's veterans by opening local community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) to provide outpatient medical care to veterans; and

WHEREAS, CBOCs transformed VA into a health care-based system that became more geographically accessible to veterans; and

WHEREAS, Since the mid-1990s, the VA has turned to outpatient clinics as a way to bring health care closer to where veterans live, with 821 clinics to supplement the care provided at 152 medical centers; and

WHEREAS, In FY 2012, H.R. 2646 authorized the VA sufficient appropriations to continue to fund and operate leased facility projects that support our veterans all across the country; and

WHEREAS, The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) abruptly changed its scoring methodology of interpreting leases as operational to capital leases after decades of precedence; and

WHEREAS, In September of 2012, the authorizations for 15 Veterans Health Administration facility leases were eliminated from a construction bill due to the scoring change initiated by the CBO; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 27 leases are impacted for FY 2013 and FY 2014 as well as a number of future leases that are set to expire; and

WHEREAS, Based on the scoring change, funding for these leases must be accounted for up-front; and

WHEREAS, VA would see a detrimental impact on its budget and medical care program without the leases; and

WHEREAS, This technical book-keeping ruling prevents Congress from enacting important authorizations to renew and establish new leases; and

WHEREAS, If no action is taken to resolve the issue, veterans will ultimately suffer increased delays and diminished access to needed medical care and services; inefficiencies in their continuum of care, and veterans' care will negatively be impacted by increased costs of duplication of services and contracted care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 26, 27, 28, 2014, That The American Legion request that Congress provide an annual or permanent exemption for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) leases from the Congressional Budget Office's scoring process, so as to give flexibility to VA to meet the health care needs of veterans.