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Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 1:38 AM

Subject: MOAA chapter News Release - VIRGINIA BUDGET HELPS MILITARY FAMILIES

To Virginia MOAA Chapter Presidents & Public Affairs

Attached (Word Document) is a News Release Template concerning the recent success with budgeting at the General Assembly, VCOC VP and Legislative Chair, COL Sam Wilder, suggested I send the release for chapter use.

Please add some local flair, and submit to your local military and civilian newspapers.

You may also want to use some of the verbiage in your chapter newsletter.

Please confer with your Legislative Committee concerning the article.

There is background about state legislative priorities at this link
<http://www.virginiamoaa.com/statelegislative/prioritiesstatelegis.html>

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Template for Virginia Chapters

(remove or replace everything in GREEN before sending to local military and civilian newspapers)

News Release

For Immediate Release

Date

Chapter Contact Name Rank

Contact Title relative to chapter (such as President or PAO)

Contact Phone Number(s) & email

VIRGINIA BUDGET HELPS MILITARY FAMILIES SAYS VIRGINIA OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) leaders from Virginia chapters are pleased with results of last week's budget negotiations in the General Assembly, according to COL Sam Wilder, USA, Ret, Legislative Chair of MOAA Virginia Council of Chapters. Officers from 16 Virginia MOAA chapters, including name of local chapter, champion 2009 Legislative priorities of Virginia's Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Services Organizations (JLC). MOAA is one of 23 organizations represented by the JLC, with a combined JLC membership exceeding 250,000.

The JLC's highest priority this year is an automated veterans claims system. Delegate Kirk Cox persuaded the House and Senate to restore a \$50,000 cut from the budget by the Governor and obtain an additional \$100,000. The funds will be used to develop a new system to cut Veterans' claims backlog, and improve efficiency. "I was very pleased," Cox said, "that even in tough economic times, the members came together to fully support our veterans who have suffered wounds and injuries in the service of our nation. With our armed forces fighting in two wars and serving in other locations around the world, the veterans claim processing system cannot keep up with the growing number of disability claims."

The second priority, Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, received \$200,000 in funding for Del. Cole's legislation that removes educational barriers for children of military families. The Compact was a JLC priority the last two years. Retired Army Colonel Don Kaiserman, a MOAA Representative on the JLC, attended committee hearings to support this legislation. He stressed, "The Compact eliminates another stress factor upon active duty families, while addressing the potential loss of key military personnel caused by a life-style unlike that of non-military families. The Commonwealth, with the nation's largest number of active duty children, now joins 11 other states as a member of the DOD Educational Opportunity Compact."

Funding was secured for two of last year's highest priorities, Wounded Warrior and Virginia War Memorial Education Center. Cox was also pleased to get \$200,000 restored to the Wounded Warrior Program to ensure adequate care for Virginians returning home with signature wounds from the War on Terror—traumatic brain injuries, combat stress and post-traumatic stress disorders. Funds will support a program to bridge gaps in federal medical treatment and provide services. Cox also completed action on funding for the Virginia War Memorial's Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center and a Wall of Honor to recognize Virginians who lost their lives in the War on Terror. Tentative funding was approved last year pending the Foundation raising \$2 million in private funding. With the passage of this budget, an additional \$6.5 million in funding is available to fund the project. "The Education Center," Cox noted, "will ensure our citizens, especially our young, will know that freedom is not free. The Wall will remind us of the most recent sacrifices made by Virginians to keep us free and safe."

Said COL Wilder, "As in the past, the budget negotiator that helped us the most was Delegate Kirk Cox. Another very strong ally for our veterans' issues this year was Delegate Phil Hamilton, the Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman. Include something about support from your local Delegate and Senators too – Preferably a quote from a chapter officer.

Said COL Wilder, "This was an extremely tough year for all legislation. Yet, thanks to the hard work of MOAA and other Veteran Services Organizations, and their supporters in the General Assembly, we have done extremely well for military families."

Information about Virginia MOAA legislative issues and local chapters, such as the name of local chapter, is available on line at VirginiaMOAA.com Also list your chapter's web and/or email address.

PHOTO ATTACHED. Preferably a local chapter photo. Storming Richmond photos are available at <http://www.virginiamoaa.com/statelegislative/stormrichmond2009.html>

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