

T U E S D A Y , M A

President Obama starts off on wrong foot with disabled veterans



*Commander Rehbein of The American Legion, center*

## The American Legion Strongly Opposed to President's Plan to Charge Wounded Heroes for Treatment

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*"I only hope the administration will really listen to us then. This matter has far more serious ramifications than the President is imagining,"*

WASHINGTON, March 16 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The leader of the nation's largest veterans organization says he is "deeply disappointed and concerned" after a meeting with President Obama today to discuss a proposal to force private insurance companies to pay for the treatment of military veterans who have suffered service-connected disabilities and injuries. The Obama administration recently revealed a plan to require private insurance carriers to reimburse the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in such cases.

"It became apparent during our discussion today that the President intends to move forward with this unreasonable plan," said Commander David K. Rehbein of The American Legion. "He says he is looking to generate \$540-million by this method, but refused to hear arguments about the moral and government-avowed obligations that would be compromised by it."

***The Commander, clearly angered as he emerged from the session said, "This reimbursement plan would be inconsistent with the mandate 'to care for him who shall have borne the battle' given that the United States government sent members of the armed forces into harm's way, and not private insurance companies. I say again that The American Legion does not and will not support any plan that seeks to bill a veteran for treatment of a service connected disability at the very agency that was created to treat the unique need of America's veterans!"***

Commander Rehbein was among a group of senior officials from veterans service organizations joining the President, White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki and Steven Kosiak, the overseer of defense spending at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The group's early afternoon conversation at The White House was precipitated by a letter of protest presented to the President earlier this month. The letter, co-signed by Commander Rehbein and the heads of ten colleague organizations, read, in part, "

*There is simply no logical explanation for billing a veteran's personal insurance for care that the VA has a responsibility to provide. While we understand the fiscal difficulties this country faces right now, placing the burden of those fiscal problems on the men and women who have already sacrificed a great deal for this country is unconscionable."*

*Read the rest here*



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