



NEWS RELEASE

CONGRESSMAN

ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA

TERRITORY OF AMERICAN SAMOA

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2422 Rayburn Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

(202) 225-8577

Fax: (202) 225-8757

Date: September 29, 1998

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. —

MILITARY TRANSPORTATION FOR VET MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS PASSES CONGRESS

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that a provision authorizing free transportation on military aircraft for veterans approved for VA medical care in Hawaii has been approved by Congress as part of the House-Senate Conference Report on the FY99 appropriations bill for the Department of Defense. The report passed the U.S. House of Representatives yesterday by a vote of 369-43 and the Senate today by a vote of 94-2.

"This is a big, big step in helping our veterans get the VA medical care to which they are entitled. The VA continues to provide medical care to our vets, but the cost of transportation to Hawaii and back has become prohibitive for most of them," said Faleomavaega. "A free military flight to Hawaii makes this benefit more meaningful."

"When this bill becomes law, any veteran in American Samoa who is eligible for VA medical care, and certified by the VA in Honolulu as authorized for the medical treatment, will be able to fly to Hawaii and back on military aircraft, on a space available basis, at no cost. For our vets with service-connected disabilities, this should be of some assistance," said Faleomavaega.

"I want to thank Senator Inouye again for his continued support of our needs. This form of legislating on an appropriations bill is not possible without the active support of a senior senator, and I cannot thank him enough," said the Congressman. "I also want to thank the Senator's state and committee staff for their work, and my staff for their continued management of the problem. Congressman John Murtha, the Ranking Member on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and his staff were also of tremendous help to protect the provision on the House side."

The conference report will be sent to the President, who has not indicated yet if he will sign the bill into law.