

Veterans': Serving Those That Served Our Country

Since I became a member of Congress, I have worked to ensure that all our veterans are given the benefits and care they deserve. In 2007, I supported the Fiscal Year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, which appropriated \$87.7 billion for all veterans' programs and is the single largest increase in funding for veterans health care in the VA's history. With our aging veteran population and so many new veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, I am committed to providing veterans with the health care and benefits we promised them by allowing hospitals to hire more doctors and nurses to decrease wait times for appointments. More funding will also be provided to help veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury (TBI), post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and prosthetics research.

Most recently, I was proud to support a portion of the Supplemental Appropriations for fiscal year 2008, which expanded education benefits veterans receive under the GI bill. This benefit has not kept up with the rising costs of a college education and this legislation restores the promise of a full, four-year college education. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, or their spouses and dependents, can now be a part of our American economic recovery, just as veterans were after World War II.

Furthermore, in light of the unacceptable situations at Walter Reed Army Hospital Center, as well as veterans' hospitals around the country, I was pleased to support H.R. 1538, the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act, which unanimously passed the House. This bill directs the Department of Defense and the VA to work together to develop policy and procedures that allow for a seamless transition for service members as they return from combat and undergo and recuperate from medical treatment. H.R. 1538 provides enhanced care for TBI and PTSD, would mandate record sharing between DOD and the VA, and would improve housing facilities for service members. Additionally, the bill would require the VA to develop procedures for a veteran's transition back into civilian life. The Senate passed this bill and I hope the President will sign it into law.

I will continue to do everything I can in Congress to ensure that veterans in the 13th District of New Jersey have access to the important care and services they were promised. Please know that my office is always open should you have any needs or concerns.