



A NEW DIRECTION FOR VETERANS & TROOPS

Under Democratic leadership (2007-2010), Congress made historic gains for America's Troops, Veterans, and Military Families, with "real successes...the passage of bills that affected nearly every veteran in America" according to the American Legion.

Status

EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- New GI Bill to restore promise of a full, four-year college education for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and their families—sending more than 700,000 to college. ★
- Expand new GI Bill college benefits to all children of fallen troops since 9/11/01. ★
- Extend new GI Bill education benefits to veterans seeking vocational and on-the-job training, as well as National Guardsmen and veterans taking advantage of online education and distance learning. ★
- Give businesses a \$2,400 tax credit for hiring unemployed veterans. ★
- Increase job opportunities with veterans' on-the-job training in the energy sector and ensure fairness to veteran-owned small businesses in federal contracts. ★
- Provide nearly 2 million disabled veterans a \$250 Economic Recovery payment. ★
- Expand relief, homeownership opportunities, and refinancing options for veterans. ★

STRENGTHEN HEALTH CARE

- Guarantee timely and reliable funding for VA medical, authorizing Congress to provide these investments a year in advance, delivering the #1 priority of veterans organizations. ★
- Strengthen quality health care for 5.6 million veterans—including 536,000 of Afghanistan & Iraq—through a 70% increase in veterans health care and other services since 1/2007. ★
- Providing nearly 18,000 new doctors and nurses*
- Adding 92 new Vet Centers and 145 community-based veterans outpatient clinics*
- Enrolling nearly 300,000 modest-income veterans in VA health care for the first time after ban imposed by President Bush*
- Expanding health care access to rural veterans*
- FY 2010 veterans' budget hailed as "cause for celebration" by American Legion. ★
- Enhances health services for women veterans, including care for newborns, and expands mental health services for veterans and health care access for veterans in rural areas. ★
- Landmark legislation for wounded veterans providing help to family members and other caregivers and eliminating copayments for catastrophically disabled veterans. ★
- Clean up the scandal of inadequate support for our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and facilities nationwide. ★
- Improve outpatient medical care, restore integrity and efficiency to disability evaluations, cut red-tape* ★
- Smooth the transition from the Armed Forces to VA health care system* ★
- Rebuild and renovate VA and military hospitals* ★

★ = Signed Into Law, 110th Congress ☆ = Signed Into Law, 111th Congress

Strengthen mental health services critical to the estimated 620,000 returning troops from Iraq or Afghanistan suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, or traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

Expand VA mental health care services, invest one-third more than in FY 2006, and provide three years of more VA health care eligibility for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

Require comprehensive DOD policy to address TBI and PTSD, establish a DOD Center of Excellence on Psychological Health and TBI, guarantee veterans a mental health assessment within 30 days, and expand hiring of mental health professionals

Invest in DOD research for TBI and PTSD, along with counseling, suicide prevention, tele-health and risk reduction efforts for troops and families

Establish a 24-hour toll-free suicide hotline for veterans

Require confidential one-on-one mental health screening for returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans

Prevent TRICARE and veterans' health care fee increases proposed by President Bush, and TRICARE fee increases proposed by DOD in 2009.



IMPROVE BENEFITS FOR TROOPS AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Give troops a pay raise of 3.5 percent in 2008 and 3.9 percent in 2009—larger than President Bush's budget in both years. The pay raise is 3.4 percent in 2010.

Retroactively provide more than 145,000 service members and veterans with \$500 for every month they were forced to serve under stop-loss orders since 2001.

Address the veterans' claim backlog and the long wait for veterans to access earned benefits by adding 10,200 new claims processors since 2007.

Provide long overdue disability benefits to more than 150,000 Vietnam veterans and survivors for exposure to Agent Orange.

Build new transition centers for wounded warriors, more military child care centers, and better barracks and military family housing.

Provide Family Medical Leave for families of soldiers wounded in combat.

Reduce Military Families Tax on surviving spouses.



REBUILD THE AMERICAN MILITARY

Provide troops in Iraq and Afghanistan with better equipment, including Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles proven to save lives.

Create Strategic Reserve Readiness Fund to rapidly address equipment shortfalls.

Ensure more equipment, training, and body armor for troops.

Strengthen National Guard preparedness for disaster response here at home, including providing more equipment.



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