

# ***Veterans Legislative Monitor***

***Congressman Jim Nussle***

***Manchester, Iowa***

Summer 2006

## ***Jim Nussle's Agenda ...***

*Expand Iowa's  
Economy to Create  
Jobs*

*Improve Iowa  
Education and  
Expect Better Results*

*Access to Quality  
Health Care for All  
Iowans*

*Secure Our Nation  
and Support Our  
Troops*

*Strengthen Iowa's  
Agriculture and  
Encourage Fair  
Trade*

*Responsible Budgets  
and Common-Sense  
Taxation*

*Promote Iowa as an  
Energy State*

*Retirement Security  
for All Iowans*

***Honor Promises  
Made to Iowa's  
Veterans***

## **Nussle Agenda to Honor Promises Made to Iowa's Veterans**

*"The sacrifices made by the American men and women who put on military uniforms and agreed to defend and protect our nation's freedoms must never be forgotten by the government or by their fellow citizens. The promises made to these veterans must be promises that are kept. I will continue supporting legislative initiatives that aim to help those veterans who need assistance, such as protection and improvement of veterans' benefits and improved health care."*

**Jim Nussle**

**Jim is working to achieve a positive legislative agenda for Iowa's veterans. Jim has worked on Iowa's veteran priorities since coming to Congress and will continue his work on these goals in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress.**

### **Goals to Honor Our Promises Made to Iowa's Veterans:**

1. Ensure Timely Access to Health Benefits in Iowa
2. Ensure Timely and Accurate Responses to Veterans' Concerns
3. Ensure Access to Disability Benefits
4. Improve Education Benefits
5. Meet the Challenges of Our Newest Veterans

**To achieve these goals, Jim has sponsored and co-sponsored many pieces of legislation. As the House Budget Committee Chairman, he has written many veterans' items into his budget. You will find more details on the following pages.**

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## Nussle's Veterans Agenda Legislation:

### Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Resolution (H.Con. Res. 376)

#### *Keeps Promises to Veterans*

- Provides \$74.6 billion in budget authority for veterans' benefits and services, \$2.6 billion more than FY 2006.
- Since 1995, total spending on veterans has increased by more than 80 percent.
- *Rep. Nussle, as Chairman of the House Budget Committee, included these provisions in the FY 2007 Budget. Congress approved H. Con. Res. 376 on May 18, 2006.*

### National Defense Authorization for Fiscal Year 2007 (H.R. 5122)

- **Fees on TRICARE Drugs:** Rejects proposed new fee on prescription drugs through TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Standard.
- Provides generic and formulary prescriptions through the TRICARE mail order pharmacy at no cost to military beneficiaries.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on May 11, 2006.*

### National Defense Authorization for Fiscal Year 2006 (H.R. 1815)

- **Concurrent Receipt:** Extends full concurrent receipt to military retirees with service-related disabilities who are unemployable.
- *Approved by Congress on December 21, 2005. Signed into law by the President on January 6, 2006.*

### Ronald Reagan National Defense Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (H.R. 4200)

- **Survivor Benefit Program:** Eliminates the current offset for social security by phasing current annuities up from 35 percent to 55 percent by 2008.
- *Approved by Congress and signed into law on October 28, 2004.*

### National Defense Authorization for Fiscal Year 2004 (H.R. 1588)

- **Concurrent Receipt:** Extends full concurrent receipt in 2004 to all military retirees with a combat-related disability including members who served in the National Guard or military reserves. Provides full concurrent receipt to be phased in over the next 10 years for military retirees with a disability ranking of 50% and above.
- *Approved by Congress and signed into law on November 24, 2003.*

### Fiscal Year 2007 Department of Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act (H.R. 5385)

- Provides \$25.4 billion for the Veterans Medical Services, a \$2.7 billion increase over FY 2006.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on May 19, 2006.*

### Flag Desecration Amendment (H. J. Res. 10)

- Proposes an amendment to the Constitution authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the U.S. flag.
- *Co-sponsored by Rep. Nussle.*

**Veterans Benefits Act (H.R. 2297)**

- Improves and expands numerous benefits for veterans.
- Expands vocational training opportunities, increases auto allowance, increases specially adapted housing grants for severely disabled veterans, and reinstates the VA vendee loan program.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on October 8, 2003.*

**Veterans Entrepreneurship and Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 1460)**

- Provides disabled veterans with assistance in starting and growing small businesses.
- Allows veterans to use education benefits to enroll in courses offered by small business development centers and other approved institutions.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on June 24, 2003.*

**Veterans Health Care Improvement Act (H.R. 2357)**

- Directs the VA to appoint chiropractors to the Veterans Health Administration.
- *Approved by the House of Representatives on July 21, 2003.*

**Rock Island Arsenal**

- Letters to Department of Defense and Congressional Appropriations Committees to ensure the safety and victory of tomorrow's veterans by pushing for new and improved defense programs at the Rock Island Arsenal, including a new mortar system for the Marines and more cost-efficient practices to ensure the continued viability of the Arsenal, a major employer.
- *Army response confirms continuation of past commitments to the Arsenal.*