



CARTER COURIER

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LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

In the past weeks I have had the opportunity to address key issues that our nation is currently facing. We have been discussing possible solutions to alleviate the soaring gas prices as we head into the summer travel season, a new G.I. Bill, and the recent recommendation of General David Petraeus to be the commander of U.S. Central Command and Lt. General Ray Odierno as the commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq.

Next week in Congress we will be debate legislation on the housing crisis, the Farm Bill and a Department of Defense authorization bill.

As always, I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress. I look forward to advancing the conservative principles that make Central Texas so great.

Until next week,



A NEW G.I. BILL FOR A NEW GENERATION OF VETERANS

Ronald Reagan spoke to the country during a radio address on National Armed Forces Day in 1982 where he quoted James Michener's book, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*. In it he writes, "of an officer waiting through the night for the return of planes to a carrier as dawn is coming on. And he asks, 'Where do we find such men?' Well, we find them where we always found them. They are the product of the freest society man has ever known. They make a commitment to the military-make it freely, because the birthright we share as Americans is worth defending."

Since the birth of this great nation, our military men and women have committed freely to defending the freedom and security of our nation. I believe, as a country, we owe them every opportunity we can afford them. I recently co-sponsored the bipartisan Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act which is designed to expand the educational opportunities given to the brave soldiers who have served so honorably since the attacks of September 11, 2001.

This country has a tradition of offering educational assistance to our returning veterans since War World II. Under the current G.I.

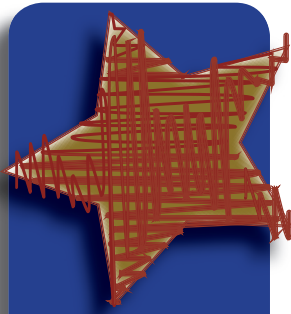
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Bill, military veterans are required to buy into the program in order to get their educational benefits. I strongly believe these soldiers have already paid the price with their unrelenting courage and sacrifice. They have earned the opportunity for a better education at a lower cost.

Not only does this bill increase benefits to soldiers that have served on active duty since 9/11, it also extends these same benefits to activated reservists and the National Guard. The bill allows the benefits to be paid in amounts linked to the amount of active duty served in the military after 9/11. Generally, veterans would receive some amount of assistance proportionally to their service for 36 months, which equals four academic years. It is important to note that veterans would still be eligible to receive any incentive-based supplemental education assistance from the military branch for which they qualify.

In addition, benefits provided under the bill would allow veterans pursuing an approved program of education to receive payments covering the established charges of their program, up to the cost of the most expensive in-state public school, plus a monthly stipend for housing costs in their area, along with additional aid for tutorial assistance as well as licensure and certification tests. This new initiative creates a new program where the government will agree to match, dollar for dollar, any voluntary additional contributions to veterans from institutions where tuition is more expensive. Under the new bill, veterans would have up to fifteen years, compared to ten years, after they leave active duty to use their educational benefits.

Currently, veterans' educational benefits are administered under the Montgomery G.I. Bill, a program designed primarily for peacetime, not wartime, service. With many of our troops having served two, three or four tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is quite possible they would not have time to complete a degree before the ten year window closes.

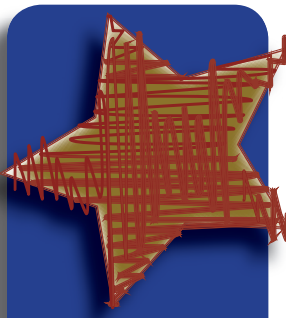
The G.I. Bill of the World War II era sparked economic growth and expansion for a whole generation of Americans. A more robust G.I. Bill holds the same potential for today's economy. Educated veterans have higher income levels, which in the long run increases tax revenues. It is estimated that 7.8 million veterans used the benefits in some form, out of a wartime veteran population of 15 million. Three former Presidents, a dozen U.S. Senators, three Supreme Court Justices and 14 Nobel Prize winners went to school on the G.I. Bill. Under today's G.I. Bill, these same leaders would receive only a fraction of the money necessary to get the same level of education.

A strong and reliable G.I. Bill will have a positive effect on our military population. I am proud to co-sponsor this bill and applaud Senator Webb and Representative Mitchell for introducing it in both houses of Congress. As the representative for Fort Hood, the largest military base in the nation, I look forward to seeing this bill signed into law.

STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT BUSH'S REMARKS ON GAS PRICES AND THE ECONOMY

This week, we saw gas prices soar to almost \$4 per gallon. The President addressed the immediate need to start drilling for oil and gas in America, something Democrats have constantly been opposed to. It is baffling that Democrats continue to demand more oil production from other countries, but refuse to expand production here at home. In fact, the only solution Democrats have offered is to raise taxes on American oil companies and ban Canadian petroleum—something that will only increase the burden on consumers.

Gas in Texas has reached the \$3.50 mark and is expected to surpass that by Memorial Day. Congress needs to pass legislation that will encourage conservation and promote the research and innovation necessary to develop new technologies. But, while doing this, we must also unlock new oil supply here at home. We live in a world where people still put gasoline in their cars, so we can't expect new technology to take the place of oil and gas overnight. Good reforms to energy problems are the only way Americans are going to see lower prices at the pump, and it is time Congress starts doing something about it.



PETRAEUS AND ODIERNO RECOMMENDATION

This week General David Petraeus was nominated to be the commander of U.S. Central Command and our own Lt. General Ray Odierno was nominated to be the commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq:

General Petraeus is a man of great integrity and has shown immense leadership in progressing towards a safer and more secure Iraq. I have no doubt that he will lead the U.S. Central Command with that same leadership and integrity.

As the Representative for Fort Hood, Texas, the largest military base in the nation and the former station of Lt. General Odierno, I have had the privilege to meet with him both in Texas and on the ground in Iraq. He worked hand in hand with General Petraeus to implement the new counter-insurgency strategy in Iraq. I can tell you that there is no one better qualified to lead our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

MAY OUTREACH HOURS

In order to better serve the constituents of the 31st District, the caseworkers of my office will be traveling to towns throughout the district and setting up local office hours. During these hours constituents can ask questions about services that my office offers or seek help with problems dealing with federal agencies.

MILAM COUNTY

Cameron
Tuesday, May 20, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Bea's Kitchen
101 East Main Street
Cameron, Texas

FALLS COUNTY

Marlin
Wednesday, May 7, 2008
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Workforce Commission Office
230 Coleman Street
Marlin, Texas

Rockdale

Wednesday, May 28, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Workforce Solutions of Central Texas
The One Stop Center
313 North Main
Rockdale, Texas

BELL COUNTY

Salado
Thursday, May 8, 2008
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Salado Community Center
Historical Society Room
601 North Main
Salado, Texas

CORYELL COUNTY

Copperas Cove
Thursday, May 29, 2008
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Copperas Cove Chamber of
Commerce
204 E. Robertson Avenue
Copperas Cove, Texas
