



**Rodney Alexander** / Louisiana's 5th District  
THOUGHTS FROM THE HILL

November 7, 2007

## **Veterans Day Revives Gratitude for Generations Past and Present**

In generations past, being a veteran was a distinction a great many Americans proudly shared.

At the time when I was growing up, my generation would often hear World War II stories from our fathers or uncles, accented by the accounts of our mothers and aunts who took on new challenges as well to preserve and protect our country during our greatest challenge up until that point. Today, these stories are becoming more and more precious to hear firsthand.

Veterans Day brings this great generation and all the ages of men and women who have served our country to the forefronts of our minds. It is a day set apart to remind ourselves that we cannot simply take the sacrifices of these men and women for granted.

If there was ever a time to grasp this truth, it is now when our country is so sharply divided over the mission in Iraq. During this time, I consider the service of our troops especially poignant.

These women and men are stepping up to answer their nation's call, following their own convictions and their desire to protect our way of life for future generations. Undoubtedly, they too will one day have stories to share with their children and grandchildren.

Meanwhile, Congress must step up as well and provide for our troops and veterans with the same sense of urgency and commitment that our servicemen and women demonstrate for all of us.

Unfortunately, recent actions by Congressional leadership do not demonstrate that level of commitment.

In mid-June, the House of Representatives passed the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008 with an overwhelming majority supporting it. In fact, there were only two "no" votes. In September, the Senate also passed the bill with only one dissenter.

Yet it was not until several weeks later – the week before Veterans Day – that the House of Representatives took up a vote on the conference report of the bill.

On Tuesday, November 6, the majority leadership finally brought the bill to the floor but they chose to include it in a packaged set of appropriations bills, tying the very important – and widely supported – veterans’ funding measure to two bills that include billions in unrelated and irresponsible spending. President Bush is expected to veto the legislation.

Rather than show respect for veterans of generations past and present by sending a clean veterans’ bill to the president, congressional leadership chose a path that will likely delay the funding for the men and women who are literally at the frontlines of history.

Despite all the gratitude that Veterans Day revives across the country, it seems House leadership forgot that tomorrow’s war heroes are in the trenches today.

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