

We must honor the sacred contract between a grateful nation and our veterans who make unselfish sacrifices in defense of freedom and democracy.

Our goal as a nation is to provide the men and women who return from service in the U.S. military with the opportunity to achieve the American Dream in civilian life.

As a twenty-four veteran of the Army National Guard and the highest ranking enlisted soldier to ever serve in Congress, I have been extremely honored and humbled to work directly on behalf of veterans and their families with a position on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

We owe it to our veterans to ensure that they are healthy, happy, and employed when they return home, and I am working hard to get results for veterans.

### **Making Jobs a Priority**

Any person that fights for this country overseas shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home.

We must do all we can to ensure our veterans are finding careers that give them the opportunity to utilize their skills, support their families, and have passion for their work.

Below are summaries of two bills I've been working on recently to make veterans' jobs a priority.

### ***Protecting the Jobs They Already Have***

I'm pleased to report that a bill I authored to protect veterans' jobs was signed into law on August 16, 2012.

My bipartisan bill (H.R. 3670) requires the Transportation Security Administration to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). USERRA was enacted to ensure that when a member of the military is called to active duty, they can keep their jobs when they come home.

This bill is another step to reform the way Washington works. It will ensure the government is a model employer and playing by the same rules as everyone else. It will also give veterans who work for TSA peace of mind in knowing their jobs are protected. Senator Lieberman has companion legislation in the Senate.

For more information about the bill, please [click here](#).

### ***Turning Veterans' Skills into Good-Paying Jobs***

When our brave men and women of the Armed Forces come home, they shouldn't have to jump through hoops to get good-paying jobs that they are already qualified for.

My bipartisan *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act* will work to help veterans utilize skills they acquired in the military to find careers at home. It does this by requiring federal agencies to recognize relevant military training and skills when certifying veterans for federal occupational licenses.

Instead of wasting time and money taking redundant trainings, veterans would be able to receive a federal license if it's determined their military experience satisfies the license requirements.

By streamlining the Federal certification process, the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act* will cut through the red tape and make it easier for our veterans to find work. If a pilot can successfully transport our troops into some of the most dangerous places on earth, they can certainly get us from Rochester to Chicago safely. Chi

I am pleased to report that the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act* passed both chambers of Congress and the President has signed it into law.

I will continue fighting to ensure our brave warriors are able to achieve the American Dream; to utilize their skills, provide for their family, and have passion for the work. I have also introduced the *HIRE at Home Act*, complementary legislation to the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act* that will address the hurdles veterans face with the state certification process

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For more information about the  
*HIRE at Home Act*  
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[click here](#)  
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For more information on the *Veteran Skills to Jobs Act*, please [click here](#) .

## Caring for Veterans' Health and Well-Being

Veterans voluntarily dedicate their lives to uphold American ideals so that we can live a comfortable, middle class lifestyle. They put their lives on the line for us every day and the reality is that these brave men and women sometimes require additional medical care after suffering serious injuries from battle.

We have a moral obligation to our servicemen and women to make sure that they have access to the medical care they need.

This is especially true for veterans who live in rural areas. That is why I have championed veterans' community based outpatient clinics and other efforts to increase access to quality care for veterans who live outside of large metropolitan areas. Click [here](#) to find a VA facility near you.

This is why I introduced the *Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services' Improvement Act* (H.R. 1855). After the sacrifices they have made, providing comprehensive rehabilitative care for veterans with traumatic brain injuries, helping them live fuller, more enriching lives, is the least we can do. This bill passed the House of Representatives in July of 2011.

This is also why I, along with a bipartisan group of my colleagues, introduced the *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act* (H.R. 3612). This bill would extend benefits to Vietnam veterans still suffering from diminished health resulting from the conflict. Our veterans are the most courageous people in the country. We must continue working to do all we can to ensure that they are provided with the best health care in the world when they come home.

## 111<sup>th</sup> Congress

Below are some of the actions taken by the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress to ensure that veterans have access to the benefits they have earned:

- Veterans began to receive benefits from the new G.I. Bill restoring the promise of a full

four-year education to men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families.

- The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act will allow Congress to approve funding for veterans' medical care a year in advance to ensure that the VA has adequate time to plan for the best way to deliver efficient and effective health care to our veterans. The budget continues on building on our historic commitment to veterans' health care. It provides the largest funding increase (nearly 12 percent) ever requested by a President in order to increase the number of VA doctors and nurses, expand VA mental health screening and treatment, and end ban on enrolling modest-income veterans for VA health care by the Bush Administration.

- The Recovery Act offered businesses a tax credit for hiring out of work veterans, made much-needed improvements to veterans' hospitals, and provided disabled veterans with a payment of \$250.

- The Defense Authorization bill gives our troops a 3.4% pay raise, increases military readiness, and supports military families by increasing funding for housing programs.

If you are a veteran who is having trouble receiving the benefits you have earned, please [click here](#).

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