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M.C.  
Presorted Standard

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# Congressman Adam Smith

## Veterans and Military Update

### November 2010

*Improving the Quality of Life for Veterans and Military Families*

#### Bolstering Support for Veterans

On May 28, 2010, the House approved the annual Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011. I was proud to help draft this bill, which authorized a 1.9% pay raise for military personnel, increased and continued special pay and bonuses for a variety of groups, and extended TRICARE coverage to dependent children up to age 26.

This legislation also increases end strengths for the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and provides vital funding to ensure that our military has the equipment and resources necessary to carry out their missions.

On July 29, 2010, I supported the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. This bill provides \$120.8 billion for veterans' programs, a 10% increase over the previous year's budget. These funds will help continue to strengthen health programs and improve benefits and compensation for our nation's veterans.

Both of these measures must still be approved by the Senate before they can be signed into law by the President.

#### Please Continue to Stay in Touch

While working in Washington, DC or Washington state, my primary focus is to stay in touch with you. Our nation faces a number of difficult challenges and your input is critical to making knowledgeable decisions on these issues.

Please stay in touch by:

- **Calling (253) 593-6600;**
- **Visiting [www.adamsmith.house.gov](http://www.adamsmith.house.gov) and sending an email;**
- **Following at [twitter.com/Rep\\_Adam\\_Smith](https://twitter.com/Rep_Adam_Smith) and on YouTube [www.youtube.com/user/Congressmanadamsmith](http://www.youtube.com/user/Congressmanadamsmith).**

I have tried to provide multiple sources for you to express your comments and concerns. Please use the form of communication that works best for you and be sure to let me know your thoughts and concerns.

I hope this newsletter finds you well. As we reflect on this past Veterans Day and as the 111th Congress comes to a close, I wanted to update you on some of the work I've been doing to support our military personnel, Veterans and their families.

It is vital that we continue to strongly support those who are currently serving on active duty, in the National Guard and Reserves, as well as their families. Our Armed Forces are deployed in numerous locations - in both combat and noncombat roles - around the globe as well as domestically. Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) is home to thousands of Soldiers and Airmen who have seen repeated deployments in support of our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As they work to keep us safe, we must work to provide them with the equipment, resources, and support they need to do their jobs as well as when they return home.

Our veterans have sacrificed much for our country, and it is our obligation to support them. We must ensure that their transition back into civilian life is greeted with the benefits and support they deserve in exchange for their years of faithful service. One issue that I have been particularly focused on is ensuring that veterans receive job training so they can find employment once they leave the military.

In order to provide all of these men and women with the appropriate support, the most important thing Congress can do is listen to them and work to better understand their needs. That is why I continue to meet with and listen to our veterans and troops in the 9th District as well as during my travels to military installations around the country and in theatre overseas.

As a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces, this is one of my primary responsibilities. In the pages ahead you will read about some of my more recent efforts in this regard. Moving forward, I want to continue to receive feedback from you. Please see the back of this newsletter for more information on how to stay in touch.





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Adam Arrives at Ft. Huachuca, AZ to receive a briefing on the military's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle programs.

### Legislation Supporting Veterans, Military Families

On May 25, 2010, two key pieces of legislation sponsored by Congressman Smith moved closer to becoming law. The pair of bills will spur job opportunities for veterans when they separate from military service and support military families when their loved ones are deployed.

Together, these bills will help address significant problems plaguing our military community – high unemployment in our veterans population and the strain placed on families when their loved ones are deployed.

The Veterans to Work Pilot Program Act of 2009, which Smith introduced in November of 2009, was incorporated into the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011. The legislation expands job opportunities by creating a 5-year pilot program to enroll military veterans in apprenticeship programs and employ them on military construction projects.

The Military Family Leave Act of 2009, introduced by Smith in July of last year, was also incorporated into the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011. The bill would provide two weeks of unpaid leave from work for the spouse, children, or parents of a member of the military who receives notification of a deployment or is currently deployed. The legislation passed the House and now must pass the Senate before it can be signed into law.

### Supporting Veterans

As more of our military personnel return home from combat abroad, the need to support them will only become greater. In light of this and building on recent legislative actions, on October 14, 2010, the President signed the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010 into law.

Some of the ways this important legislation supports veterans include:

- Improving certain benefits administered by the VA;
- Helping to create employment opportunities, caring for homeless veterans, and strengthening education benefits;
- Improving the welfare of veterans and their families by increasing insurance limits, permanently extending a life insurance program for totally disabled veterans, and increasing certain burial and funeral benefits.

Congressman Smith was instrumental in ensuring this legislation moved forward by coauthoring a letter to Congressman Bob Filner, the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, requesting his support in advancing legislation to help address unemployment among veterans.

### Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay

With the support of Congressman Smith, Congress established Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay (RSLSP), providing \$500 for each month/partial month served in stop loss status. Service members, veterans, and beneficiaries of servicemembers whose service was involuntarily extended under Stop-Loss between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009 are eligible for RSLSP. The average benefit payment is \$3,700. **To receive this benefit, those who served under stop-loss must submit a claim for the special pay by Dec. 3, 2010.**

For more information visit [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0710\\_stoploss/](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0710_stoploss/).



Adam receives a briefing on the operation of the Army's Grey Eagle program.

Working to honor the service and commitement of our military personnel, veterans and their families.