

# CONGRESSMAN DAN LIPINSKI

## Legislative Update for Veterans

August 2007

Dear Veteran,

With tens of thousands of troops deployed overseas in harms way, Americans are once again being reminded of the great sacrifices that all of our men and women in the armed services are making and have made throughout the history of our nation. I would like to once again thank you for your service to our country, and inform you about what I have been working on to properly honor your sacrifices and those made by all of our veterans.

In order to better serve you, I will be holding a Veterans Town Hall meeting on Thursday, September 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Argo-Summit American Legion Post #735 located at 6050 S. Harlem Ave. in Summit. This will be an opportunity to share your concerns and find answers to any questions that you may have. In addition, Congressional Staff will be available starting at 6:00 p.m. to help you with any particular issues you may be having with the VA.

Your friend,

*Dan Lipinski*  
Dan Lipinski



Congressman Lipinski discusses veterans issues with local veteran, Joseph Delaloye, during a town hall meeting held at Robert E. Coutler, Jr. American Legion Post in LaGrange.



### Congressman Dan Lipinski's Veterans Town Hall Meeting

**Please join Congressman Dan Lipinski on**

**Thursday**

**September 13th ~ 7:00 p.m.**

**Argo-Summit American Legion Post #735**

**6050 S. Harlem Ave., Summit**

Congressional Staff will be available at 6:00 p.m. to assist with issues related to the VA, or with any number of other veterans' related issues, such as:

- \* Obtaining military personnel and medical records
- \* Assisting with filling out veterans' claims
- \* Seeking medals earned, but not yet received
- \* Learning about the Veterans' History Project
- \* Requesting a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol
- \* Gathering information about veterans' benefits

**For more information or to seek assistance, please contact (312) 886-0481.**



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## Lipinski Helps Provide for Life After Military Service

Support for our troops must not end when they return home. It is important to continue to work to secure full funding for the GI Bill, allow disabled military retirees to receive their full military retirement and full disability compensation, and invest in homeless veterans programs. This year Congressman Lipinski has helped pass the following legislation aimed at enhancing the lives of veterans:

- H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007, which would provide monetary benefits to mariners and their widows.
- H.R. 67, the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act of 2007, establishing a grant program to assist states with providing outreach services to veterans for their benefits and VA services.
- H.R. 1315, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2007, providing specially adapted housing assistance to soldiers transitioning to veteran status and creating a scholarship program for veterans seeking careers assisting in the rehabilitation of blind veterans.
- H.R. 2239, the Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act, extending vocational rehab benefits to soldiers who are hospitalized or who are receiving outpatient services with a permanent disability as a result of injury in the line of duty.
- H.R. 1284, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-living Adjustment Act of 2007, directing the VA to provide a COLA effective December 1, 2007 to the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- H.R. 612, the Returning Servicemember VA Health Care Insurance Act of 2007, providing for an additional 3 years of VA health care for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, totaling five years of care.
- H.R. 2366, the SBA Veterans' Program Act of 2007, expanding entrepreneurial resources for veterans.

## Lipinski Works to Assure Proper Health Care for Veterans

Sadly, for the last two years the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has actually run out of health care money and had to request emergency funds just to keep existing programs operating. To prevent funding shortfalls in 2008, the House of Representatives recently approved H.R. 2642, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, which provides the single largest increase in funding in the 77 year history of the VA. These funds will help improve veterans' services and facilities around the country, including the VA clinic in Oak Lawn and the brand new centers for eye and spinal cord injuries at Hines VA Hospital. This bill also includes:

- \$1.6 billion to enable the VA to hire 1,100 additional claims processors to work-down the backlog of benefits claims and to reduce the time to process new claims.
- \$28.9 billion to improve access to medical services for all veterans.
- \$4.1 billion for on-going maintenance and renovations of existing facilities to address an identified backlog of repairs.
- \$600 million above the President's request for mental health and Traumatic Brain Injury.
- \$12.5 million more for blind rehabilitation outpatient services.
- \$130 million to help care for homeless veterans.

To ensure continued adequate funding for veterans' needs, Representative Lipinski helped introduce H.R. 2514, a bill which would establish mandatory VA health care funding levels.