

A NEW DIRECTION FOR VETERANS & TROOPS

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEW DIRECTION CONGRESS



The Democratic-led Congress has pledged to put our troops and veterans first. The new GI Bill passed in the 110th Congress is scheduled to go into effect on August 1, 2009. By restoring GI Bill veterans education benefits, improving veterans' health care, rebuilding our military, and strengthening other benefits for our troops and military families, we are working to keep our promises to our courageous and faithful men and women in uniform.

On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.

Signed
Into Law

AMERICAN RECOVERY & REINVESTMENT ACT

111TH CONGRESS

Creating jobs & improving the quality of life for our troops and veterans as part of our plan to get the American economy back on track.

Rebuilding and renovating VA and military hospitals to prevent another Walter Reed-like scandal, and reducing the backlog of veterans waiting to access earned benefits. ★

Giving businesses tax credits for hiring unemployed veterans, and providing disabled veterans a payment of \$250 to help make ends meet during this economic crisis. ★

Helping military homeowners harmed by the housing crisis. ★

Building new transition centers for wounded warriors returning from combat, more military child care centers, and better barracks and military family housing. ★

Renovating DOD facilities and making them more energy efficient. ★

STRENGTHENING VETERANS' SERVICES

110TH CONGRESS

Have done more to increase veterans funding in two years than GOP-controlled Congress did in 12—increasing funding more than \$16 billion since January 2007 — including the largest single-year increase in the 78-year history of the VA.

Strengthening quality health care for 5.8 million patients and earned benefits for all veterans and providing much-needed maintenance of VA health care facilities. ★

Focusing quality care on the 333,000 veterans who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly those with PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury. ★

Reducing the 396,000 claims backlog and the 177-day average wait for veterans to access earned benefits by adding 5,100 new claims processors. ★

Expanding VA health care to 250,000 veterans with no service-connected disability who had been cut off by President Bush. ★

Hailed by the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Paralyzed Veterans of America and other major veterans' groups as a "major victory" and an "impressive commitment" to our veterans. ★

Modernizing the disability claims processing system, expanding mental health care, providing counseling for veterans' family members and addressing the needs of rural veterans.

★ = Complete

STRENGTHENING BENEFITS FOR TROOPS & FAMILIES

110TH CONGRESS

Providing a New GI Education Bill, a pay raise, better military health care and family leave to care for wounded soldiers.

Restoring the promise of a full, four-year college education for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, making them part of the economic recovery through a new GI Bill for the 21st Century. ★

Giving troops a pay raise of 3.5 percent in 2008 and 3.9 percent in 2009—larger than Bush's budget in both years. ★

Cleaning up the scandal of inadequate care for our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and facilities nationwide. ★

Strengthening Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury care at military facilities and preventing TRICARE and veterans health care fee increases proposed by the Bush Administration. ★

Expanding relief and homeownership opportunities for returning veterans through VA home loans. ★

Providing Family Medical Leave for families of soldiers wounded in combat. ★

STRENGTHENING THE AMERICAN MILITARY

110TH CONGRESS

Rebuilding our military readiness—at its lowest level since the Vietnam War.

Providing more Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles than President Bush requested, which are proven to save lives in Iraq. ★

Creating a Strategic Reserve Readiness Fund to rapidly address military equipment shortfalls and ensuring more equipment, training, and body armor for our troops. ★

Strengthening National Guard preparedness for disaster response here at home, including providing more equipment. ★

Expanding the number of troops to meet our national security needs. ★

★ = Complete