

Veterans Day 2011 Statement

Written by Mike Honda
Friday, 11 November 2011 14:04

Today we honor our nation's veterans and pay tribute to their service and sacrifice. One in ten Americans over the age of 18 are veterans, including nearly 28,000 brave men and women from my Congressional District. While there are many issues that demand extensive debate in Congress, the ability of America's veterans to find employment when they return to civilian life must never be a point of contention.

No one who fought for America overseas should have to fight for a job when they come home.

I am encouraged by the Senate's recent action on the Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credits—both included in President Obama's jobs plan—which will offer tax credits to businesses that hire America's veterans. I urge the Republican leadership in the House to quickly bring this crucial legislation to the Floor so we can vote to rush it to the President's desk. With veteran unemployment levels at historic highs, we cannot rest until every veteran has a job upon their return.

We must make veterans' health care a legislative priority as well. We must build on the progress the Democratically-led Congress made to strengthen veteran's health care by providing the largest single increase in funding in the history of the VA. We must continue to ensure timely and reliable funding to ensure the over 5 million veterans who receive VA medical services are able to benefit from the enhanced health services for women, expanded mental health services, and improved health care access in rural areas that Democrats put in place.

No one who fought for America overseas should have to fight for the care they need when they come home.

It was my honor to join Japanese American World War II veterans and their families last week in Washington, DC, where they were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian award for distinguished achievements. My late father, Giichi "Byron" Honda, was one of the recipients of the medal, having served in the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) while my

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mother, and I were incarcerated behind barbed wire in a Colorado internment camp. The devotion to country and Constitution that the veterans of the 422nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Battalion, and the MIS displayed nearly seventy years ago is an indelible reminder that we must never let “war hysteria, racial prejudice and a failure of political leadership” derail the ongoing mission of America – to live as one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. To our veterans, both living and fallen, today and every day we say thank you, thank you, thank you.