

On Veterans Day, we honor the service and sacrifices our nation's veterans have made, a sacrifice which I remind myself of every day. Although we can never adequately thank our brave veterans and troops for their service to our nation, we humbly salute them and their families for their sacrifice, and as a Member of Congress, I am committed to making certain that America takes care of her sons and daughters and that their contributions are never forgotten.

Our nation's veterans have a champion in President Obama, who submitted a [Fiscal Year 2010 budget request](#)

to Congress that sought to increase funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs by 15% this year with further increases over the next five years. This funding would provide more services for homeless veterans, mental health care and traumatic brain injuries, and the timely implementation of the Post-9/11 G.I. bill to expand educational opportunities. Acting on the President's request, the House of Representatives approved the President's request to provide a path to restoring and revitalizing the services provided to veterans by adding \$14.5 billion above the Fiscal Year 2009 funding level.

In addition, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has added \$1.4 billion for veterans funding in 2009, expanding the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to cover the full cost of college for surviving military children, providing an economic stimulus payment to disabled veterans, increasing funding for maintenance at VA medical facilities and construction of extended care facilities.

For years, our veterans have faced uncertainty about their health care due to chronically late VA budgets – over the last 22 years, 19 VA budgets were late, making it difficult for the VA to make decisions about how much funding to direct to particular health care programs. To address this problem, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act, which will allow for the funding of VA medical accounts one year ahead of schedule, giving the agency and veterans the certainty they have been seeking.

In the year that has passed since last Veterans Day, I was able to achieve success on two long-standing issues of importance to veterans that I have been working on, Filipino veterans equity and veterans' emergency health care.

After a decades-long struggle, Filipino World War II veterans have [finally](#) received the recognition and compensation they deserve for their brave service to the U.S. during World War

II. This recognition and compensation came in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by President Obama on February 18, 2009, two days after the 63rd anniversary of the 1946 Rescission Act that deprived these veterans of their rightful benefits.

Also, for an veteran who has a medical emergency and is rushed to a nearby hospital that happens to be a non-VA hospital used to face the possibility that he or she might be required to cover the costs of non-emergency treatment at that facility introduced legislation to fix this injustice, and a version of this legislation was ultimately included into a larger bill in the Senate, and signed into public law in December 2008.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I will continue to work to see that healthcare and benefits for our nation's veterans are adequately funded. Congress must not, and cannot, shortchange the brave men and women who put their lives at risk to defend our country.