

On May 23, 2011, I introduced the bipartisan Post-9/11 Troops to Teachers Enhancement Act of 2011 (H.R. 1947), which seeks to expand the existing Troops to Teachers program to allow more troops to teach in America's schools.

The Troops to Teachers program, originally created in 1994, provides qualified troops with financial incentives to teach in the nation's neediest schools. The legislation will make the existing program more accessible by reducing length of military service requirements for participants, expanding the number of school districts at which troops may receive a stipend to teach, and by creating an advisory board charged with continuously seeking ways to improve awareness and participation in the program.

According to the Military Officers Association of America, this legislation, "Would help reenergize the Troops to Teachers program by making the program much more accessible and attractive to younger service members who have service since 9/11."

The American Legion stated that this legislation, "Will not only assist veterans transitioning to new careers as teachers, but also provide first-class role models for America's children and youth."

Our country is in need of qualified teachers; and veterans and returning troops are in need of support and assistance when they return home. This legislation addresses both of these issues, providing our classrooms with teachers who possess unique leadership skills, and giving our nation's veterans the opportunity to serve their country again. Expanding the Troops to Teachers program will help America's veterans and students reach their full potential.

California State University, Sacramento President Gonzalez lent the school's support to the bill, saying, "Congresswoman Matsui continues to be a strong ally to veterans and higher education. As a university president and a veteran, I deeply appreciate her efforts to expand and improve the Troops to Teachers program. She is helping to ensure that our brave men and women in uniform can obtain their college degrees and meet our public schools' need for quality teachers."