

This Monday, we will celebrate Memorial Day – a day where we pause to honor those heroes whose lives were lost in service to our country. We are forever indebted to their sacrifice.

As we take this time to remember these fallen service members, it is essential that we persist in working to support all of the men and women who are still fighting everyday to protect our country. I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know how I have been working to support our troops just this past week.

The House of Representatives considered the National Defense Authorization Act on the floor this week. During debate on this bill, I offered an amendment that would improve and expand the Troops to Teachers program, which helps put veterans separating from military service on a path to begin new careers as teachers in public schools, and specifically in math and science classrooms where there is a national shortage of qualified teachers. This program helps provide the necessary training and certification.

My amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act will make the existing Troops to Teachers program more accessible by reducing the 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. In our current economic climate, so many of our returning troops are having difficulty finding employment upon leaving the armed services. Expanding Troops to Teachers will help support these heroes, and allow them to serve their country once again by serving in our nation's classrooms. Fortunately, my amendment was adopted, and is now part of the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act.

Additionally, earlier this week, I voted in favor of H.R. 1383, the Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act, which will correct an issue in the Post-9/11 GI Bill by raising benefits to veterans at private institutions of higher learning. On the same day this week, I supported passage of H.R. 1407, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act, which will increase the amount of benefits paid to disabled veterans and their dependents. Beginning December 1, 2011, veterans with service-related disabilities, as well as their survivors and dependents, will receive an increased compensation and clothing allowance. I am hopeful that the financial assistance provided in these two bills will help our veterans remain on firm footing, and enable our returning troops to receive the education they are looking for.

Please know that I will continue to fight for legislation that supports our troops, our veterans, and their families, as they sacrifice for our country each and every day. As always, if I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call my office at 916-498-5600.

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