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Rep. Doris Matsui Joins Colleagues to Announce Legislation to Expand ‘Troops to Teachers’ Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT), along with Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), Representative Tom Petri (R-WI), and Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA) introduced the bipartisan, bicameral Post-9/11 Troops to Teachers Enhancement Act, which seeks to expand the existing Troops to Teachers program to allow more troops to teach in America’s schools, during a press conference today in Washington, D.C. Congresswoman Matsui’s remarks, as prepared for delivery, are below:

“I am pleased to be here with my colleagues Senators Bennet and McCain, whose commitment and service to our country is both unwavering and inspiring. I am proud to partner with Representative Courtney on this important piece of legislation. I also want to commend Representative Petri, whom I worked with to introduce the Troops to Teachers Improvement Act of 2009, language that is included in the legislation we are introducing today. Thank you all for your leadership to help strengthen and expand the Troops to Teachers program, which has made a wonderful impact on our schools, and most importantly, on our students.

“The Post 9/11 Troops to Teachers Enhancement Act updates and modernizes our existing Troops to Teachers program by expanding the number of troops eligible to receive stipends to teach in some of our nation’s toughest schools. This legislation will ensure that veterans are able to provide leadership and mentor at-risk kids, and enable troops to teach in their home communities.

“By making improvement to the current law, more than 3,600 schools in California alone could benefit from this program. In my hometown of Sacramento, nearly 150 additional schools could participate, and students and schools across the country will benefit as well. Already, Troops to Teachers has had 737 participants in California, and impacted over 425,000 students. Yet, the need for more teachers persists.

“I first learned about the Troops to Teachers program at a California Purple Heart Veterans Day event in my district. Two different veterans who were participating in Troops to Teachers informed me about the opportunities afforded by the program to continue to contribute to our country. After serving their nation in the Armed Forces, they are now able to teach in high-need school districts.

“Right now, our country is grappling with an aging teaching workforce, and we have a need for qualified science and math teachers. These needs match qualities learned in the military including critical problem solving and leadership skills, and make veterans ideal role models for our students. Simply put: the Troops to Teachers program has never been more important. It meets the needs of our students and our veterans.

“This bill is a crucial step in supporting our veterans and students by restoring the original intent of this program, and providing our men and women in uniform the chance to serve their country again.”

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