

Floor Remarks for the Honorable Doris O. Matsui
Troops to Teachers Amendment to National Defense Authorization Act
Monday, May 23, 2011

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Courtney, Petri, and Matsui Amendment to expand and improve our nation's existing Troops to Teachers program.

I am pleased to introduce this amendment with my colleagues, with whom I also sponsored the Post 9/11 Troops to Teachers Enhancement Act of 2011.

Our amendment would make the program more accessible to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan by reducing the military service requirement from 6 years to 4 years.

It would also expand the number of school districts eligible to participate and create an advisory board to increase awareness about, and participation in the program.

Finally, this amendment transfers the program from the Department of Education to the Department of Defense.

Currently, the program is operated by the Department of Defense but funded through the Department of Education.

By housing the administration and funding of Troops to Teachers in the same Department, we will be able to streamline this program for the benefit of all of its participants and the students it serves.

With their proven service, diverse backgrounds, and leadership traits, our nation's veterans can serve their country *again* by serving as teachers in our country's most vulnerable schools.

With more veterans returning home from overseas, we need to support programs such as Troops for Teachers that successfully transition them from the military back into civilian life.

I have seen firsthand the success of this program by visiting teachers in my district who returned from service and used the program's stipend to help pay for teaching certification classes and exams.

This amendment is a win-win for our veterans and our students.

I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bipartisan amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.