



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
28TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

April 21, 2010

Congressional Record Statement
THE HONORABLE LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act

Over the past year, I have become increasingly concerned about veterans access to benefits, care and job training. We must encourage soldiers completing their active duty service to sign up with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This is a critical message we must reiterate to all our returning servicemen and women.

As the heroes of our country, we believe our veterans and their families deserve the very best benefits to ensure peace of mind. With this in mind, Congress has provided more than 185,000 service members and veterans with \$500 for every month they were forced to serve under stop-loss orders since 2001. In addition, we've created new claims processors to make sure our veterans earn their benefits in a timely manner. We built new transition centers for wounded warriors, more military child care centers, and better barracks and military family housing. With veterans' families in mind, Congress has increased support for veteran caregivers. And lastly, those disabled veterans can rest assured that their benefits will keep pace with the cost of living and their needs.

Today I rise in support of S. 1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. This landmark legislation will provide support to family and others who care for disabled, ill, or injured veterans; will enhance health services for the 1.8 million women veterans, including care for newborns for the 1st time in history; to expand mental health services for veterans and health care access for veterans in rural areas; and to prohibit copayments for veterans who are catastrophically disabled.

To help meet the many hardships and sacrifices associated with lengthy recovery and rehabilitation from severe injuries of veterans, S. 1963 will provide support services to family and other caregivers of veterans, including education on how to be a better caregiver, counseling and mental health services, and respite care for family and other caregivers of all veterans. It also provides health care and a stipend for caregivers living with severely wounded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

This support is vital for the wounded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and their families, as about 20 percent of active duty, 15 percent of reserve and 25 percent of retired and separated members have a family member or friend who has been forced to leave a job to care for the veteran full-time, according to the Dole/Shalala report.

The bill also expands and improves VA health care services for the women who have bravely served their country, working to remove existing barriers to women veterans seeking health care, providing up to seven days of care of newborn children of women veterans for the first time in history, and enhancing treatment for sexual trauma for women at the VA.

I urge my colleagues to vote YES in favor of this historic legislation for the sake of our heroes and their families. Our veterans deserve our gratitude and support at the very least.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise Slaughter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.