

Tomorrow as we celebrate Veterans Day, we pause to remember our veterans who have served their nation, often at great risk, and those who have sacrificed, all for the cause of our freedom. Without the brave efforts of all of our men and women in uniform, our country would not stand so boldly, shine so brightly and live so freely. We remember that these Americans truly are our country's greatest heroes, and we must therefore do all we can to make certain that they receive the care and benefits that they have earned, and the respect and recognition they deserve not just on Veterans Day, but every single day.

To begin to fulfill that commitment, this Congress is on course to enact a veterans' spending bill that provides the largest increase in veterans' health care in our nation's history. We have provided \$6.6 billion more than last year's funding for the Veterans Administration, and \$3.7 billion more than the President's budget request. Over \$37 billion will fund veterans' health care to treat 5.8 million patients, including over 263,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. As these service members return home from their missions, this Congress is committed to amply fund research into and care for conditions such as traumatic brain injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Too many of our veterans are suffering from PTSD and traumatic brain injuries and need better care to move on with their lives after experiencing the horrors of a war zone.

And as we celebrate our brave veterans, we too are reminded that there are currently over 400,000 veterans waiting for their earned benefits. To help remedy this dreadful problem, we have allocated nearly \$125 million to provide 1,800 new claims processors to address the huge number of benefit claims backlog.

In addition to increased health care funding, Congress passed the Veterans Outreach Improvement Act, which allows the Veterans Administration to partner with state and local governments to reach out to veterans and their families and ensure that they receive their veterans' benefits. Additionally, we in the House recently voted to help end the Disabled Veterans Tax which forced disabled military retirees to give up one dollar of their pensions for every dollar of disability they receive.

Veterans Day is not just a day off but a reminder of what we owe 24 million veterans in America. Let us honor the service of our troops, their families, and America's veterans with actions that fulfill our commitment to them and are worthy of our grateful nation. That is our moral obligation, and one that sends the right message and only makes our nation stronger in years to come.

On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind.