

On this Veterans Day, I want to take a moment to thank our brave servicemen and women, more than 59,000 in my district alone, to whom we all are forever indebted to for their bravery, selflessness, and courage.

As your Congresswoman, it is my duty to ensure that our veterans receive the care and benefits they so rightfully earned and deserve, especially as new veterans return home from our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Over the past four years, Congress led an unprecedented effort to increase access to benefits, care, and job training for veterans.

We restored the promise of a full, four-year college education with the passage of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, covering the cost of a college education at a public university in the greatest overhaul of the G.I. bill in over 20 years. This fall, nearly 300,000 veterans are enrolled in college as a result of the law, and more than \$2.9 billion in education benefits have been paid to veteran students.

See how the Post-9/11 GI Bill is helping veterans achieve their goals. As our nation's economy continues to recover, veterans will help us secure long-term economic prosperity of the country they defended, as well as their own future, through the power of education. In the meantime, as part of the Recovery Act, Congress provided nearly 2 million disabled veterans a \$250 payment to help make ends meet.

Although the country was involved in two major conflicts from 2003 to 2006, VA health care funding did not increase, co-pay increases were proposed, and investment in much-needed research to provide the best care for veterans suffering from unknown injuries languished.

So Congress went to work to ensure that the cost of the war included the cost of the warrior and fought for budgets that honor the sacrifices of our service members and veterans. Since then, we have provided nearly \$23 billion for veterans' health care and services. Our veterans and their families deserve the very best benefits to ensure peace of mind. There are 9.5 million veteran caregivers across the nation; 96% of them are women family members – wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. It is important for us to acknowledge and support these valiant homefront heroes too.

To further ensure this piece of mind, this year for the first time ever, Congress issued funding for medical care for veterans one year in advance, providing a stable and uninterrupted source of funding not subject to political delays. This landmark legislation guarantees that the VA can better prepare for the health care needs of America's veterans.

This day and every day, let us honor their service with actions that fulfill our commitment to our troops, their families, and our veterans – and that are worthy of our grateful nation.

It is an honor to represent you, and the most effective way for me to do my job as your elected representative is to keep in touch with you. Please contact me at (716) 853-5813 in Buffalo or (585) 232-4850 in Rochester if you have questions regarding federal legislation or if you need

help navigating the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).