

3rd Graders Join Rep. Israel to Bring Valentines to Veterans

Sunday, February 11, 2007

Northport NY, 2/12/07—Today, Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) brought 3rd grade students to the Northport Veterans Administration (VA) to give homemade valentines to veterans. The trip is part of the annual “Valentines for Vets” campaign, where school children write Valentine cards to show their appreciation to local veterans.

“These students will learn a lesson they will never forget, by meeting the brave men and women who gave so much for our country,” Israel said. “Yet, the best way we can honor our veterans is by delivering on the promises they were given when they were recruited by the armed forces. The veteran population is aging and their health care needs are increasing significantly. That’s why one of the priorities that the new Congress fought for the hardest when fixing the budget for 2007 was to increase funding for veterans health care by \$3.6 billion to provide health care for 325,000 veterans.”

During the week of Valentines Day each year, the Department of Veterans Affairs hosts the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program, better known as “Valentines for Vets.” This is a program to pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans. Currently, more than 98,000 veterans are cared for in VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciles and nursing homes. With the additional support of columnist Ann Landers, newspaper readers, classroom students, Scout troops and others annually generate more than a million “Valentines for Veterans” cards and letters to local VA medical centers and nursing homes to express gratitude for veterans’ service to their country. Community and state officials, military and veterans organizations and youth groups often join with the public during the National Salute week to visit patients in VA hospitals, nursing homes, state veterans homes and other facilities.

Because the last Congress did not pass all spending bills for Fiscal Year 2007, the new Congress had to pass a bill setting funding levels for all federal agencies. The new Congress increased funding for veterans health care by \$3.6 billion to provide health care for 325,000 veterans.