

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

One of the most important and most rewarding parts of my job is helping my constituents navigate through red tape to get the benefits they deserve. My office provides assistance to constituents with Medicare, Social Security, housing, labor, immigration and tax issues. You can learn more about the constituent services my office provides by clicking [here](#).

One of the key ways in which I can assist my constituents is to help veterans and their families receive the benefits and services they've been promised. On Sunday, I joined over a dozen local agencies and nonprofits to host a veterans and reservists workshop at the Northport Veterans Administration Hospital. Veterans and reservists that attended the workshop received information on services available at the VA and experts were on hand to assist returning reservists and veterans with issues relating to employment, health care and disabilities.

Veterans and reservists have fought valiantly to defend our country, but all too often they come home to red tape and long wait times for the services and benefits they were promised. This is unacceptable. The health and well-being of all veterans is a top priority of mine. When our soldiers return home they should not only collect their benefits without hassle, but they should be provided in a timely and accurate manner.

I am proud to tell you that over the years I have secured \$2.6 million in retroactive benefits for veterans in my district. That total is made up of constituents like Douglas, a World War II Vet from Huntington Station who worked with my office to get the \$22,246 in retroactive benefits he was owed. Or Catherine from Huntington—she fought with the VA for benefits after being widowed. Her husband was a WWII veteran. We were finally able to get her the \$11,220 in retroactive benefits that she deserved. There was also a gentleman named John, a constituent of mine who served in the Vietnam War, who had to fight with the VA to receive proper benefits for war related stresses. After John began working with my office and we began advocating for him he received \$32,000 in retroactive benefits.

And this Friday, October 26, I will have the honor of presenting three veterans with the medals they earned but never received.

As a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, I fought to pass a veterans funding bill providing \$87.7 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This \$6.7 billion increase represents the single largest increase in funding for veterans health care in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration.

My office can act as a liaison between veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding medical issues at local VA hospitals. We will assist in determining the level of benefits

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to which you are entitled. Our office will also assist veterans in establishing entitlement to medals. I encourage any veteran or their dependants who needs assistance in obtaining the benefits they deserve to contact me via my [website](#) or by contacting my Hauppauge office at (631)951-2210.

Securing retroactive veterans benefits is only one of many ways that I can assist my constituents. I hope that you will visit my [constituent services page](#) to learn about other services and assistance I can provide. I enjoy solving problems and helping my constituents navigate through red tape. If you ever need assistance, I'm only a phone call ([or click](#)) away.