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Sacramento, CA - Yesterday, Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-05) met with a panel of Sacramento veterans and announced the launch of her Veterans Working Group. At the request of Rep. Matsui, local veterans from diverse backgrounds joined her to discuss the challenges and issues they are most concerned with.

"Our nation's veterans have served our country honorably, and we have a responsibility to make sure that service is rewarded with the very best the government can give back to them. Hearing firsthand what challenges they face is crucial to representing their unique needs in Congress," said Rep. Matsui.

"As a veteran I have concerns for all of our nation's veterans, young and old. I followed my father's footsteps into the military; he was a World War Two veteran and a prisoner of war. We all appreciate Congresswoman Matsui's commitment to Sacramento's veterans and look forward to working with her in the future," said Richard Beach, a veteran of the Iraq War.

Rep. Matsui developed the working group in order to hear about the needs of the veteran community in Sacramento. Matsui has assisted numerous local veterans in receiving VA benefits and ensuring their claims are promptly reviewed by the VA. California's Fifth Congressional District is home to 42,000 veterans, two former U.S. Air Force bases, and a VA hospital.

Two items that were raised by many of the veterans in attendance were concerns about the VA's process in reviewing applications for benefits and a systemic communication gap between the military and members of the armed forces leaving service after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congresswoman Matsui will review the matters thoroughly in the coming weeks.

In Congress last year, Rep. Matsui championed legislation to sharply increase funding for veterans' benefits, including the largest funding increase for the VA in its 77-year history. This money will help clear the VA's disability claims backlog, increase research and treatment options for victims of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, and reduce waiting times for veterans looking to access essential services.

“As we look ahead to the time when we bring our troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is clear that we must be prepared to help them to healthfully reintegrate into our community. Taking steps now to make sure we meet their needs is a key part of my commitment to serving Sacramento’s veterans,” said Rep. Matsui.

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