

MATSUI URGES CONGRESS TO FULFILL PROMISE TO VETERANS Calls for full funding of veteran health care

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Washington, DC – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) issued the following statement in support of increasing the level of funding for veteran health care in the Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations Bill.

[Click here to view Congresswoman Matsui's floor statement on Veterans' Needs](#)

“It is appropriate that the last bill we take up before recessing for the Memorial Day district work period is the Military Quality of Life Appropriations bill – the bill which includes funding for Veteran Affairs. Today when we pass this bill and fund veterans' programs, we are reaffirming the promise we made to each veteran when they agreed to serve and protect our nation. And part of that promise, one of the most important promises, is to provide them with superior medical service.

“While I commend the Committee for increasing funding for veterans' health care over the President's request, even leading veterans groups state it does not increase funding enough. The funding does not keep pace with the rising population of veterans or the rising cost of health care.

"And yesterday the Rules Committee had the opportunity to make in order an amendment by Congressman Obey that would have increased funding for veterans health care to the necessary levels. The Republican majority chose not to, and this is truly unfortunate.

"Most Members already hear from veterans in their district that they have to wait far too long for medical care—and I am no different. In some instances veterans face wait times of up to six months. Yet the bill before us does not provide the funding necessary to provide prompt access to health services.

"And with our on-going operations in Iraq and Afghanistan the number of veterans needing medical service will only continue to rise.

"I am truly thankful that those men and women honorably serving our nation in the world's hot spots are likely to return home to their family and friends. However, with protective armor and the improving quality of medical treatment in the field, more of our service members are surviving combat wounds and returning with an increased need for medical service. Many of these men and women are amputees who will need months of rehabilitation to learn to walk and use prosthetic limbs. Because of these injuries, the men and women of our Armed Forces will need continuous care for the rest of their lives.

"At a time when American men and women are serving our nation in hostile environments, we must demonstrate our intent to fulfill our promise and fund veterans' medical services at the highest possible level. We must provide them with the most efficient and highest quality medical care this country can offer."

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