

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington—April 13, 2007

Veterans: Historic Joint Hearing Examines "Low-Balled" Disability Ratings

On Thursday, I called on top officials at the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to investigate reports of service members being "low-balled" on their disability ratings. I am concerned that disability ratings are being intentionally underestimated as a cost saving measure. At the hearing, I also demanded a rating system that will accurately rate service members with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. The questioning was part of a historic joint meeting of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Full Story: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=272320>

Watch my questioning here - rtsp://video.webcastcenter.com/srs_g2/murray041207.rm

["Army, VA hit hard in hearings in Senate"](#) – Tacoma News Tribune

National Guard: Taking the Concerns of WA State National Guard Members to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau

On Wednesday, at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing I asked the Chief of the National Guard about concerns I have heard from National Guard soldiers in our state. I asked Lt. General H. Steven Blum about complaints from Washington National Guard members that I visited with last Monday at Camp Murray in Tacoma. Many of the Guard members told me they are not receiving adequate notice of call-up to active duty. That lack of notification time has impeded their ability to access the healthcare system they rely on.

Full Story: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=272218>

Listen here - <http://murray.senate.gov/video/070411-guard.mp3>

["Murray questions readiness of National Guard units heading to war"](#) – Seattle Times

Veterans: Getting Answers from the Veterans Secretary on TBI and Walter Reed

On Thursday, I questioned VA Secretary Jim Nicholson about why the VA and Pentagon were aware of bureaucratic problems at Walter Reed three years before they were publicly exposed and failed to act. At the same hearing Secretary Nicholson also agreed to write to Defense Secretary Robert Gates in order to have the Pentagon begin to document explosions on the battlefield that could result in Traumatic Brain Injury

- Details on my questioning on Walter Reed - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=272331>
- On Traumatic Brain Injury - <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=272348>

Listen here - <http://murray.senate.gov/video/070412-vamilcon.mp3>

["New Walter Reed questions"](#) – Salon.com

Stem Cells: Speaking Out and Voting to Expand Stem Cell Research

On Wednesday, I spoke on the Senate Floor about the need to expand stem cell research. In the speech I discussed my father's experience with Multiple Sclerosis. I believe that families today deserve the hope and potential cures that were not available to my family then. That is why I voted on Wednesday to expand stem cell research. The bill passed the full Senate by a vote of 63-34.

Full Story: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=272221>

Watch my speech on the Senate Floor - rtsp://video.webcastcenter.com/srs_g2/murray041107.rm

["Northwest senators vote for stem cell bill; Bush plans veto"](#) – The Columbian

Equal Pay for Women Workers: Working to Closing the Wage Gap

On Thursday, I took part in a hearing of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to examine the persistent barriers to equal pay for women in the workforce. I spoke on how unfair discrimination in the workplace should not be tolerated in any form. As a mother and a grandmother, I want my children to live in a country where my daughter can earn just as much as my son. That is why I support the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Fair Pay Act.

Full Story: <http://murray.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=272352>