



Veterans Update

JUNE / JULY 2006

Dear Friend:

When our country sends its people into combat – its sons and daughters, its husbands and wives, its sisters and brothers, its mothers and fathers – it has an obligation to take care of them when they come home. The sacrifice and patriotism of our veterans can never be repaid in full, but we owe it to them to honor their service. That is why we must provide veterans the quality healthcare, job opportunities, and retirement security they deserve.

This newsletter is intended to keep you informed about some issues important to American veterans. I hope that you find the articles informative and helpful. Also, please feel free to call me at 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658) on any issue of concern to you. I am able to assist you on problems ranging from health care to service medals. You can e-mail me through my website website (www.holt.house.gov), which has recently been redesigned to include more information and links to valuable resources. This is also where you can subscribe to my electronic newsletter, which updates constituents about my activities on your behalf.

Thank you for your service to our country. I look forward to hearing your opinions. Please contact me if I can be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rush Holt".

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

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Please visit my Website at www.holt.house.gov to learn more about what I am working on, and to sign-up for my occasional e-mail newsletter, the [eGenda](#).

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently admitted that sensitive personal information for up to 26.5 million veterans, spouses, active duty, National Guard, and Reserve members was compromised by the negligent actions of a VA employee. Ignoring VA rules, this employee brought home a government computer containing a data file with the names and Social Security numbers of these veterans, and the computer was subsequently stolen during a burglary.

This episode represents one of the largest compromises of personal information in American history, and a clear collapse of VA protocols for protecting personal data. With another person's Social Security number and other information, an imposter can open credit accounts, make fraudulent charges, or withdraw money. Upon learning of this incident, I called immediately for an investigation into why VA's internal safeguards failed, and what needs to be done to prevent future loss of veterans' personal data. I also sent letters and e-mails to leaders of veterans organizations throughout Central New Jersey to alert them of the theft and provide information on how their members can protect themselves.

Our veterans deserve the full facts concerning this incident and the assurance that any violations of federal law will be vigorously prosecuted. They also deserve protections. That is why I have cosponsored the *Veterans Identity Protection Act*, which would grant free credit monitoring and immediate notification to all those who had personal information compromised by this incident. ▶



Rush Holt presents Old Bridge veteran Apostolos Zaferiou, who took part in the Allied invasion of Normandy on D-Day, with overdue service medals at Holt's annual event for nominees to the Service Academies.

Protect Yourself From Identity Theft

If you have not already, you should call the VA at 1-800-FED-INFO (333-4636). Additionally, if you find suspicious activities on your credit report:

- Contact the credit bureau to have the information corrected and fraudulent account closed;
- If a credit card was used, alert the issuer to the fraud/mistaken charge and consider closing the account;
- Report the theft to the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/idtheft or by phone: 1-877-ID-THEFT (438-4338).

Affordable Health Care

In President Bush's 2007 budget plan, he proposed to raise TRICARE enrollment fees, deductibles, and pharmacy co-payments for retired service members. I strongly oppose this plan. These hikes are unfair and unnecessary.

I was pleased that the 2007 defense authorization bill, approved by the House on May 11, blocked these cost increases through the end of next year. Retired members of the Armed Forces and their dependents deserve to know that the federal government will honor their service by keeping health care affordable and accessible. ▶

Last month saw the death of Sonny Montgomery, a former Congressman from Mississippi who left a legacy of advocating for active duty and retired Armed Forces personnel. The Montgomery G.I. Bill expanded the educational assistance programs available for veterans who are making the transition to civilian life. Rep. Montgomery's work helped the recruitment and retention of qualified Armed Forces personnel, and boosted our economic growth by investing in our talented workforce. Sixty years after the first assistance was offered to those returning from combat in World War II,

I am working to pass *The New G.I. Bill of Rights for the 21st Century*. This legislation would improve benefits for the men and women currently serving our country – including National Guard and Reserve forces – and provide overdue assistance that military retirees deserve. For example, it would fully repeal the Disabled Veterans Tax (which prohibits veterans from receiving concurrently disability benefits and their military pension) and the Military Families Tax (which penalizes survivors of those killed in combat). ▀



Rush Holt discusses the need to fully fund veterans' health care on the steps of the Library of Congress during his "D.C. Day" for New Jersey veterans.

CUTTING RED TAPE

After several unsuccessful efforts to increase his VA disability rating, a veteran from Somerset County suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and an ear condition asked for my assistance with his appeal. I was pleased to advocate on his behalf, and the VA recently granted him a 100 percent rating, increasing his disability compensation. If I can be of assistance to you, do not hesitate to contact me.

**R E P.
RUSH
HOLT**

Town Hall Meetings

www.holt.house.gov

I hope to see you at these upcoming meetings to discuss issues such as Social Security, economic development, hometown security, health care, education, and anything else that may be on your mind.

Saturday, July 29

Holmdel Township

10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Holmdel Municipal Building
4 Crawfords Corner Road

Sunday, July 30

Lawrence Township

1 – 2:30 p.m.

Lawrence Police and
Municipal Court Building
2207 Lawrence Road

Monday, July 31

Milltown Borough

7 – 8:30 p.m.

Milltown Borough Hall
39 Washington Avenue

Wednesday, August 2

Franklin Park (Somerset County)

7 – 8:30 p.m.

Franklin Park School
30 Eden Street

Tuesday, August 15

Monroe Township

7 – 8:30 p.m.

Monroe Township
Municipal Building
1 Municipal Plaza

To receive more regular updates about my activities in New Jersey and in Washington, D.C., please visit my webpage at www.holt.house.gov and sign up for my e-mail newsletter.

Representative Rush Holt

As your Representative, I am here to help. Contact me any time.

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On the web: www.holt.house.gov

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certificate of authenticity
with the date it was flown.**

Representative Rush Holt
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M.C.
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Official Business

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