

# AN UPDATE ON Veterans' Issues

## FROM CONGRESSMAN JOE SESTAK

Dear Veterans and their families and friends,

**After serving in the U.S. Navy for 31 years, I left the military and came to Congress, acutely aware of the great debt of gratitude our nation owes its Veterans.** As such, I have worked for and voted in support of legislation that increases funding for Veterans' programs, extends healthcare coverage for Veterans and provides educational benefits, among other provisions.

For instance, after the Administration vetoed a bill that would have provided a large financial increase to the Veterans Affairs' Budget, my colleagues and I in the House worked hard to pass the Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which the President then signed into Public Law, and which appropriated some \$88 billion for VA programs and benefits.

In addition to efforts supporting Veterans, active service members and their families through legislation in Washington, my caseworkers and I interact regularly with Veterans in the District — handling cases ranging from problems with VA benefits to misplaced service medals, and helping with medical care for Veterans to hosting annual Veterans Summits attended by hundreds of my constituents.

**I will continue doing everything possible to ensure that our Veterans and their families are well cared for and have access to the resources they need to secure their well-being.**

Inside, you will find more information on recent legislation, as well as a list of resources that can help with medical issues, insurance coverage, and small business issues, among others.

Warmly,



JOE SESTAK



*Congressman Sestak joins local Veterans to discuss what Congress has done for their health care and other benefits.*



# Legislative Update on Veterans' Issues

Over the past year, I have sponsored, advocated and voted for the following legislation in support of our Veterans:

- Co-sponsored and provided testimony on legislation that would give the Iraqi government 90 days to provide fair restitution to American POWs from the 1991 Gulf War. The Administration has vetoed this measure in the past.
- Voted to support the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008, providing \$160 billion to improve the safety of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. This legislation, now signed into law, will also give members who served three years active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan a full college education.
- Voted for and included provisions to the House-passed Defense Authorization Bill for FY 2009, which provides a 3.9% pay raise for our troops and \$800 million in equipment for the Reserves and the National Guard. I included provisions related to combat casualty research, rotorcraft development and increased funding for autism research and treatment for children of military families.
- Voted for and passed the Military Reservists and Veteran Small Business Reauthorization and Opportunity Act of 2008, which became law on February 14, 2008. This legislation expands opportunities for Veteran-owned businesses and strengthens relief to small businesses employing National Guard members or reservists.
- Voted for and passed the Heroes Earnings Tax Assistance and Relief (HEART) Act, which includes tax provisions intended to assist military personnel and their families, Veterans and public service volunteers.
- Voted for and passed the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008, which increases VA home loan limits for high-cost housing areas and extends the time a lender must wait before starting foreclosures, from three months to one year after a service member completes service.
- Voted for and passed the Veterans Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2008 that requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reimburse Veterans receiving emergency treatment in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities until Veterans are transferred to Department facilities.
- Voted for and passed the Veterans Substance Use Disorders Prevention and Treatment Act of 2008 to expand and improve health care services from the Department of Veterans Affairs for substance use disorders.
- Voted for and passed the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2008 to increase the rates of disability compensation for Veterans with service-connected disabilities, as well as the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled Veterans.
- Secured agreement from Chairman Filner of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to support legislation for VA health care coverage of priority 7 and 8 enrollees (Veterans with income and/or net worth above the threshold presently defined by the VA).



*Congressman Sestak talks about Veterans' issues at a local American Legion.*



*Veterans from the Seventh Congressional District spend an evening at a local VFW.*

# A Look Back at the Second Annual Veterans Summit



*A local Veteran celebrates Memorial Day at a Broomall ceremony.*

At his second annual Veterans Summit on May 12, 2008, Congressman Sestak gave Veterans of his District open access to resources to address their individual needs and their broader concerns about Veterans' issues. More than 350 people filled the entrance corridor and auditorium at Ridley High School, where they had the opportunity to speak face-to-face with experts, including House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner.

Outside the auditorium, representatives from various Veteran and other organizations staffed 35 booths to provide one-on-one assistance. Caseworkers from the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Coatesville VA medical centers discussed specific concerns about VA benefit claims and explained the filing process. Private organizations, including hospitals in the District, described the services they offered for Veterans rehabilitating from a variety of injuries.

Veterans seeking help with their post-military careers discussed their situations at booths set up by a university's Small Business Development Center and the VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. In addition, representatives from a local technology school and the VA Philadelphia Education Center provided information about post-secondary education.

The summit also featured two expert-panel discussions. Congressman Sestak and Chairman Filner participated in the first session, which focused on health care and VA benefits, while the second panel fielded questions on education and business opportunities.



*The 7th Congressional District Veterans Summit gave local Vets access to a variety of important resources from Veterans organizations.*

## RESOURCE GUIDE

*Here please find contact information for local and regional organizations that support Veterans and are ready to help you with any issues or concerns:*

### **Philadelphia VA Medical Center**

3900 Woodland Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Phone: 215-823-5800

### **Coatesville VA Medical Center**

1400 Black Horse Hill Road  
Coatesville, PA 19320-2096  
Phone: 610-384-7711

### **Wilmington VA Medical Center**

1601 Kirkwood Highway  
Wilmington, DE 19805  
Phone: 1-800-461-8262

### **VA Regional Office & Insurance Center**

5000 Wissahickon Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
Regional Office: 1-800-827-1000  
Insurance Center: 1-800-669-8477

### **PA Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs**

Bldg. S-0-47  
Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003  
Phone: 717-861-8500

### **Montgomery County Department of Veterans Affairs**

1430 DeKalb Street  
Norristown, PA 19404-0311  
Phone: 610-278-3825

### **Delaware County Department of Veterans Affairs**

201 West Street  
Delco Government Center, Room 115  
Media, PA 19063  
Phone: 610-891-4646



*Congressman Sestak spoke about military issues with Tuskegee Airman at a local Flag Day ceremony.*

### **Chester County Department of Veterans Affairs**

601 Westtown Road, Suite 385  
PO Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
Phone: 610-344-6375

### **Veterans Affairs Philadelphia Education Center**

5000 Wissahickon Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144-4867  
Phone: 1-800-827-1000

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.

## Attention! You may be eligible for an Economic Stimulus Payment!

Congressman Sestak has received word from the IRS that nearly 5.2 million disabled Veterans and retirees in America, more than 10,000 of whom reside in his 7th Congressional District, qualify for an Economic Stimulus Payment but have not filed to claim it. A special stimulus category includes recipients of certain benefits from Social Security and Veterans Affairs who are not normally required to file a tax return. Those in that group must file a tax return this year by October 15th to receive their stimulus payment of up to \$600 per individual or up to \$1200 for married couples filing jointly.

Those who *have not yet filed a tax return* and wish to receive the economic stimulus payment must file a 1040A form, available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). Those without internet access should contact the local IRS Office in Media at 1400 N. Providence Rd., Media, PA or call (610) 891-6002.

## Save the Date

### **Congressman Joe Sestak invites you to the 7th Congressional District Senior Summit and Service Fair.**

This event will feature a service fair with various service organizations and case workers from federal, state, and county agencies to address individual questions and concerns. Prior to the fair, the Congressman will be joined by federal, state, and county officials for a discussion and question-and-answer session to help address concerns facing seniors and their families and caregivers.

*Wednesday, August 13, 2008*

*Registration: 12:30*

*Panel Discussion: 1:00 – 1:45*

*Service Fair: 2:00 – 4:00*

*Penn State Brandywine Campus  
25 Yearsley Mill Road, Media, PA 19063*

**To register, please call 610-892-8623 or visit [www.sestak.house.gov/senior\\_signup.shtml](http://www.sestak.house.gov/senior_signup.shtml)**

## CONGRESSMAN SESTAK WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!



*If you have a question or issue, or would like to share your opinion, please feel free to contact or visit the Washington, D.C. Office or District Office in Media.*

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