

**REP.
RUSH
HOLT**

**Standing Up for Veterans
Giving Veterans a Voice
in Washington**

www.holt.house.gov

In June, Rush hosted a meeting of Central New Jersey veterans for a day of briefings on Capitol Hill. The veterans met with VA representatives, key Members of Congress, and national leaders from the Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America. These leaders discussed key issues for veterans, such as mandatory funding for the VA to ensure health care for eligible veterans. They also discussed concurrent receipt of benefits, the survivor benefit program (SBP), and veterans' unemployment. The briefing provided attendees with an opportunity to learn the latest legislative and regulatory developments that will affect veterans. ▶



Rush Holt talks with Merchant Mariners about the Veterans History Project, which is funded by Congress through the Library of Congress.

Representative Rush Holt

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

New Jersey Office
50 Washington Road
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550
ph: 609-750-9365
fax: 609-750-0618

Washington Office
1019 Longworth House Office Bldg.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
ph: 202-225-5801
fax: 202-225-6025

Toll free: 1-87-RUSH-HOLT **On the web: www.holt.house.gov**

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with the date it was flown.**

Representative Rush Holt
50 Washington Road
West Windsor, NJ 08550

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Rush Holt
M.C.
PRSRT-STD

REPRESENTATIVE RUSH HOLT

Veterans Update

JULY 2004

Dear Friend:

Now more than ever, all Americans appreciate the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans. Men and women in our Armed Forces are currently serving in dangerous places around the globe, and they do so out of love and commitment to our nation. We have an obligation to honor them and our veterans of past conflicts by fulfilling the promises that our nation has made to our men and women in uniform. We owe them more than words of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

I am working hard in Congress to make sure that Central New Jersey's veterans receive the health care and retirement security they need and deserve. I have put together this packet to provide you with what I hope you will find is useful information on legislative issues and actions that affect veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

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

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

"I believe our country should live up to the words of Abraham Lincoln, who said, '...let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle...'"

- RUSH HOLT

New Jersey Office:

50 Washington Road • West Windsor, NJ 08550 • (609) 750-9365 • Toll Free: 1-87-RUSH-HOLT
(1-877-874-4658)

Washington Office:

1019 Longworth HOB • Washington, DC 20515 • (202) 225-5801

E-Mail (through my web site): www.holt.house.gov

**REP.
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Standing Up for Veterans Improving Access to Quality Health Care

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In his continuing effort to ensure quality healthcare and income security for our nation's veterans, Rush Holt has endorsed pro-veteran legislation that would achieve the following goals:

- End the tax on disabled veterans, and allow all eligible veterans with service-connected disabilities to receive both military retirement pay and veterans' disability compensation concurrently (H.R. 303).
- Allow veterans to fill prescriptions written by outside physicians at VA facilities (H.R. 998).
- Permit military and federal civilian retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to deduct TRICARE supplemental premiums (H.R. 1231).
- Direct the VA to take specific actions to reduce the unreasonable backlog of pending benefit claims (H.R. 1264). ▶



Rush Holt attends a Memorial Day Service in Freehold, where he discussed the importance of fulfilling our promise to those who have served.

Supporting Active Military and Reserves

Supporting our veterans also means supporting those who have served in recent conflicts. Rush Holt believes Congress should act quickly to consider and pass legislation that would ensure income security and educational opportunities for active military and reservists.

For example, federal civilian employees called into active duty from the reserves should be allowed to receive their full salary while serving in the armed forces (H.R. 216). Another way to provide much-needed financial relief for those brave men and women is to allow reservists and their spouses to exclude up to \$30,000 of their income from taxation (H.R. 1133). Also, educational assistance under the Montgomery GI bill should be increased, eliminating any associated reductions in pay (H.R. 1212).

On any given day, as many as 250,000 veterans are living on the streets or in homeless shelters. Right now, the number of homeless Vietnam War era veterans is greater than the number of service members who died in the war. Veterans of Desert Storm are also appearing in the homeless population. In order to help unemployed veterans and those returning from active duty find jobs, the House should pass legislation authored by Rush Holt that would designate an appropriate week as "Hire a Veteran Week" (House Concurrent Resolution 252).

For more information, visit Rush Holt's Troop Support Center at www.holt.house.gov. ▶

**REP.
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Standing Up for Veterans Fighting Veterans' Budget Cuts

www.holt.house.gov

Earlier this year, Rush joined local veterans to protest proposed cuts to the Veterans' Administration (VA). President Bush's budget proposal for 2005 was \$1.2 billion short of the amount requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and failed to keep up with medical inflation. This budget, if enacted, would hurt New Jersey veterans.

- An estimated 43,000 New Jersey veterans, including an estimated 8,200 veterans in active treatment, would be unable to afford the costs for VA health care, causing them to drop their enrollment in the VA system.
- Other veterans in New Jersey would remain in the VA system but be forced to pay more for their health care. The average cost for these veterans would be more than \$350 annually, and some local veterans could face new fees of \$550 or more.
- VA enrollment would be frozen for "Priority 8" veterans, preventing an estimated 4,400 veterans in New Jersey from enrolling to receive care.

Due to strong opposition by Rep. Holt and many others, the House did not pass the President's

(Below) Rush Holt congratulates the 2004 Central New Jersey nominees to the U.S. Service Academies.



Rush Holt presents Delfim Martin with a long overdue Bronze Star on June 12.

budget. Unfortunately, it did pass the House Republican budget, which also falls far short of what was recommended on a bipartisan basis by the Committee on Veterans Affairs. Holt opposed this budget, and instead supported an alternative that would have boosted spending for veterans' care by \$2.5 billion.

"Veterans in New Jersey and across the country should have the resources they deserve and require for their health," said Rep. Rush Holt. "Nickel and diming veterans on health care is no way to treat those who served our nation." ▶

