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Military Newsletter

44TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA • WINTER 2008
CONGRESSMAN KEN CALVERT

Dear Active Duty Military Service Members and Veterans,

One of the most vital duties as a congressman is to provide for our military, both veterans and active duty members. Since my first term, providing for our military has been a top priority and I continue to work in Congress to faithfully represent current and former service members.

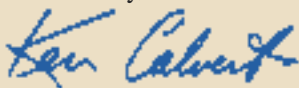
There is no doubt that the torch has been passed from veterans of previous wars to the current warfighters in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our current military has endured a long and difficult conflict in both countries and they continue to operate with professionalism and effectiveness. The recent news out of Iraq would have been unimaginable a year ago: there has been a 60% decrease in attacks since the beginning of the full surge operations in June 2007. U.S. military casualties are at their lowest levels since March 2006. At the local level, sheikhs and tribal leaders from both the Sunni and Shia populations are putting aside sectarian differences for the good of their neighborhoods.

Despite the recent good news, I know many Americans are frustrated by the length and cost, both monetary and in the loss of American lives, of the war. However, we have a very real opportunity before us to succeed in Iraq and make it, and the rest of the world, a safer and better place. This is the second time in 15 years that the U.S. has been in Iraq; we must succeed now so we don't have to return a third time.

In March, General Petraeus will testify before Congress about the ongoing results of the surge and the plan for the future. Gen. Petraeus has exceeded expectations and I look forward to his testimony.

In the meantime, I will continue to serve the military community in Washington, D.C. It is an honor to represent you in Congress and please contact my office with your input.

Sincerely,



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress

P.S. Please sign up for my e-newsletter through my website at www.calvert.house.gov.

Support the Troops!
www.americasupportsyou.mil



REP. CALVERT meets with Marines at Camp Pendleton to discuss ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and thank them for their service.

Contact Representative Ken Calvert at one of the following addresses or through his website www.calvert.house.gov:

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Rep. Calvert Speaks at Riverside National Cemetery on Veterans Day 2007



REP. CALVERT meets with local veterans to discuss the war in Iraq and veterans benefits.

"There are countless stories from every war in our history of unimaginable sacrifices. Many go unnoticed except by those who survive those perilous moments. Our military is not boastful. Most would probably prefer the quiet approval of their fellow soldiers than a parade in their honor. However, today on Veterans Day we do not let them escape without knowing our Nation's gratitude. We recognize them, we thank them, we wave the American flag and we hold ceremonies in their honor. It is the least we can do and yet it pales in comparison to all that our veterans have done for us."

—REP. CALVERT

(Speech at Riverside National Cemetery, 11-11-07)

Peace, love, and tolerance?

by Congressman Ken Calvert

The City of Berkeley has long been associated with the peace movement in the United States. However, recent actions taken by the Berkeley City Council prove their "love" of peace has turned into blind hatred of our military, to the point that they would equate the Marines' presence in the community to other violent influences that exist in the town.

On January 29, 2008, the city council approved a resolution which directed the City Manager to send letters to the Marine Corps Recruiting station and the Commandant advising them that the Marine recruiters are "uninvited and unwelcome intruders." In addition the city council directed the City Attorney to investigate the recruiting station for violation of municipal anti-discrimination laws. Finally, the council provided the ultra-liberal communistic organization Code Pink special parking privileges directly in front of the Marines Officer Recruitment center to facilitate protests and also offered them a free sound permit for six months.

In response to the outrageous and insulting actions taken by the City of Berkeley, I have signed onto a letter to President Bush asking him to immediately rescind funds appropriated to the City of Berkeley that were included in the Omnibus spending bill that was signed into law on December 26, 2007. I have also signed on as a cosponsor to two bills which recognize the patriotic and professional men and women serving in the United States Marine Corps and that would transfer all of Berkeley's FY2008 federal funding included in the Omnibus, about \$2.1 million, to the United States Marine Corps. (H.R. 5222 and H. Res. 958).

It is shameful that the City of Berkeley is so blinded by their rage that they forget the very people who have fought and died for the rights to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. The United States Marine Corps has a long and proud history of service to this nation and of helping people around the world. The City of Berkeley may have thought they were making a brave stand against the Marines when in fact all they did was show their short-sighted ignorance about our military. The City of Berkeley can revel in their idiocy and self-righteousness without the help of the federal government.

Providing For The Warfighter

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Rep. Calvert actively supports Congressional initiatives that will:

Active / Reserve Force Issues

- Sustain defense budget of at least 4% of GDP to fund both people and weapons needs
- Increase active duty, Guard and Reserve end-strength
- Support Guard and Reserve retirement/compensation to reflect "operational reserve" demands
- Restore equitable Guard and Reserve GI Bill benefits

Retirement/Survivor Issues

- Preserve full-inflation cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs)
- Eliminate the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) deduction from SBP
- Authorize full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation
- Restore VA survivor annuities for qualifying widows who remarry after age 55

Health Care Issues

- Fix Medicare/TRICARE payment rate formula to promote provider participation
- Ensure a broad TRICARE pharmacy formulary
- Improve seamless transition between the Defense and VA health care/benefits systems
- Provide full funding for veterans enrolled in the VA health care system

Veterans, Family, & Other Issues

- Improve quality, efficiency, and timeliness of VA claims-processing system
- Authorize pre-tax payment of health, dental and long-term care premiums
- Provide incentives for employers/government contractors to hire military spouses
- Authorize compensation/support for family member caregivers of severely injured
- Win congressional approval of Flag anti-desecration amendment