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Presorted Standard

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Congressman Adam Smith Veterans and Military Update

April 2010

Improving the Quality of Life for Veterans and Military Families

New Chairman of Air and Land Subcommittee

On January 21, 2010, I was named the new Chairman of the House Armed Services Air and Land Subcommittee. This is a vitally important subcommittee, with jurisdiction over all Army and nearly all Air Force acquisition programs.

This new role is also very important to Washington State. As chairman, I will now play a major role in making significant decisions regarding programs such as the future and expansion of the Stryker and other programs that function on Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Additionally, while I will be taking on a new role with the Air and Land Subcommittee, I will continue to stay fully engaged on my work on the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee.

We owe the men and women who serve our country an enormous amount of gratitude and respect for their service and sacrifice. That should not just come in words, it should come in action. As chairman of the Air and Land subcommittee, I will continue to work to ensure that our men and women in uniform not only have the equipment and support they need today, but well into the future.

Please Continue to Stay in Touch

While working in Washington, DC or Washington state, my primary focus is to stay in touch with you. Our nation faces a number of difficult challenges and your input is critical to making knowledgeable decisions on these issues.

Please stay in touch by:

- Calling (253) 593-6600;
- Visiting www.adamsmith.house.gov and sending an email;
- Following at twitter.com/Rep_Adam_Smith and on YouTube www.youtube.com/user/Congressmanadamsmith.

I have tried to provide multiple sources for you to express your comments and concerns. Please use the form of communication that works best for you and be sure to let me know your thoughts and concerns.

Ensuring that our military personnel, veterans and their families receive the benefits and support they deserve continues to be a top priority of mine in Congress. As a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, and Chairman of the Air and Land Subcommittee, I will continue to be an advocate for the brave men and women of our armed services - both active and veterans - as well as their families.

The 9th district is home to Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force bases, now called Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). The brave soldiers and airmen from JBLM have been deployed numerous times to support our efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many have lost their lives, many more have been injured. We must continue to honor their service and their sacrifices by ensuring that our veterans, active military personnel and their families have the benefits and support they deserve. This must continue to be a top priority of Congress.

In order to help provide our troops with the support they need, the most important thing Congress can do is listen to them and ensure their needs are being met. I continue to meet with and listen to our troops in the 9th District and on bases around the United States and throughout the world. Meeting with members of our military greatly contributes to my understanding of the challenges they face, and these meetings are of enormous benefit as my subcommittee crafts legislation to set our nation's defense policy and spending priorities.

Our veterans, military personnel and their families make tremendous sacrifices on our behalf, and they deserve our support and gratitude. I will continue to seek ways to improve their quality of life and improve the benefits they receive for their service. In the pages ahead, this newsletter will outline some of the things Congress has worked on recently to support our men and women in uniform.

I want to continue to hear from all of you. Please see the back of this newsletter for more information on how to stay in touch.





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Adam takes a question at his annual Veterans Town Hall late last year.

TRICARE Unaffected By Health Reform

When Congress passed health care reform in March, it did not affect TRICARE. However, some veterans have understandably expressed concern that their health care may somehow be affected by the recent reforms in the future. To ensure that this is not the case, Congress passed - and I

cosponsored - the TRICARE Affirmation Act, which explicitly states that no member of our military receiving benefits and care under the Department of Defense programs will be affected by the healthcare reform bill.

Restoring Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA)

As many of you know, on February 16, 2010 the Department of Defense (DoD) announced a temporary pause to the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) program, which provides financial support for military spouses to take occupational training and education courses. While the pause was necessitated by an unforeseen, unprecedented spike in enrollments, it was not appropriately handled by the Department, who did not effectively notify enrollees and other program stakeholders of changes. Families depended on these funds, and should have been properly notified of any changes.

To address this problem, I and other members of Congress reached out to the Department of Defense to inquire about the pause and requested that they find a way to resume the program's operations. With more than 136,000 spouses participating in this program, even a short pause can have a serious impact.

The Department ensured me that they would honor their commitment to current MyCAA enrollees and prepare options for the long-term continuation and sustainment of the program.

Helping Our Veterans Find Employment

On April 22, 2010, I introduced legislation to aggressively address the soaring unemployment rates within our veteran's community. The Veterans Employment Assistance Act of 2010 includes a series of proposals that will expand training and

education opportunities, enhance the ability to transition technical military skills to the civilian workforce, and improve small business assistance programs for veterans.

The Veterans Employment Act:

- Establishes an apprenticeship pilot program that would encourage the employment of veterans on military construction projects.
- Expands the Post-9/11 GI Bill to allow returning veterans to use the benefit for apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs that will help them acquire the skills they need to find stable, family-wage jobs in their communities.
- Establishes a Veteran Business Center Program within the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide critical entrepreneurial training and counseling to veterans.
- Helps transitioning servicemembers build on the technical skills learned in the military and better market those skills in the civilian workforce.
- Establishes a Veterans Conservation Corps Grant Program and a Veterans Energy/Green Jobs Grant Program to connect veterans with the green-jobs market.



Adam presented a Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart to, Sgt Cameron Krier, an Army reservist.

Working to honor the service and commitement of our military personnel, veterans and their families.