



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 30, 2012

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Veterans' Legislation Sent to President for Signature

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the House of Representatives passed two pieces of legislation to better support America's veterans and their families. H.R. 4057, as amended (392-3), will provide student veterans with more information to make informed decisions on schools when using their Post-9/11 GI Bill. And, S. 3202 (393-0), the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012, are both being sent to the President for signature.

"We have accomplished a lot the past two years," stated Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "These two bills will provide veterans with greater educational opportunities, more accessible transition programs, dignified memorial services, and with an eye on the future, to better care for those who are wounded on the field of battle. The Committee will continue to work together with the Senate in the 113th to take up the mantle of the greatest issues facing our veterans today—veteran unemployment, access to mental health care, and the disability claims backlog."

Included in the legislation passed is a provision to establish an Open Burn Pit Registry at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Registry will track the symptoms and illnesses of those who have served in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, and who were exposed to burn pit contaminants.

"As Chair of the Subcommittee on Health, I have heard from countless veterans who returned home from war consumed with concern about how the air they breathed in battle, which was often filled with smoke from the burning of solid waste, could affect their health and well-being," stated Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle. "I am very grateful that the Open Pit Burn Registry Act the House passed earlier this year is included in this bipartisan legislation that will be sent to the President. With this provision, our veterans and their families can be assured that we are taking every available step to track and monitor their long-term health needs."

Broadly supported by the Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), the legislation passed will become law in the near future.

"I have been proud to work closely with Chairman Miller to keep our veterans needs above the political fray," stated Senator Patty Murray, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "The passage of these critical bills, that will give veterans important tools to better utilize their educational benefits and that will ensure they are given honorable and dignified burials, is just another example of that critical work. Our veterans deserve nothing less than us working across party lines to meet the challenges they face."

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