



## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

It's been a busy start to our Second Session here in Congress, as it should be when working on behalf of America's veterans. The Committee is continuing to provide oversight of VA. Last week, we held two hearings – the first of which confirmed the Committee's suspicions that VA was engaging in illegal contracting practices; while the second focused on our National Guard and the high unemployment these men and women face today. I am also very concerned that VA may not be exempt from budget cuts this coming year due to sequestration. I believe VA should be exempt from any cuts, and I have asked the President to confirm to Congress, and our veterans, the same. This is not the issue with which to play politics. --Rep. Jeff

**Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs**

### CHAIRMAN MILLER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA: DON'T CUT VETERANS PROGRAMS

Chairman Miller has sent a letter to the President requesting he reassure America's veterans regarding VA's 2013 budget and move forward to remove the uncertainty surrounding potential cuts at VA due to sequestration. The Committee has called on the Administration for months now to clarify the law contained in the Budget Control Act of 2011. Read Chairman Miller's full statement [here](#), and read the letter to the President [here](#). Chairman Miller also introduced legislation to stop any potential cuts through the Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012 (H.R. 3895).

### VA OFFICIALS ADMIT TO BREAKING FEDERAL CONTRACTING LAWS

During last week's full Committee hearing, VA officials admitted to breaking federal contracting laws when purchasing pharmaceuticals, costing upwards of \$1.2 billion. Deputy Secretary W. Scott Gould said the mistakes were part of a "team failure." The Committee expressed its collective frustration that senior leadership did not step in when the wrong-doing was first reported several years ago. Said Chairman Miller, "Instead of performing due diligence in its open market purchasing, VA officials took the easy route." The Committee has partnered with the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to investigate further. To watch the webcast of the hearing, click [here](#).

### VETERANS UNEMPLOYMENT RATES DROPS IN NEW YEAR

As our Iraq veterans surge home, they will face transition challenges as they return to civilian life. One of the biggest challenges will be finding meaningful employment. In some good news on that front, the veterans unemployment rate dropped slightly over the last month. While this number is still alarmingly high, we are hopeful that this trend will continue and the veterans unemployment rate – not just for post 9/11 veterans, but for all veterans – will continue to drop. Read Military Times' coverage of this subject [here](#).

### IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

In Washington state, \$150,000 was given to the state Department of Veterans Affairs through a special lottery program called Hometown Heroes Raffle. The \$10 raffle tickets benefited the state's Veterans Innovations Program. The service provides crisis and emergency relief, plus education, training and employment assistance for Washington veterans returning from post-9/11 conflicts. To learn more, click [here](#).

### MEET OUR MEMBERS: DR. PHIL ROE

Did you know that in addition to being a veteran and doctor, Dr. Phil Roe (TN-02) is also a bluegrass musician. Read more about his career and passion for music [here](#).

### CONGRESS HONORS THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

Today, the House of Representatives honored the Four Chaplains, four men who gave their fellow comrades not only comfort through faith and gave their lives to save others 69 years ago when the USAT Dorchester went down. Watch the video tribute on the House Floor [here](#).

***UPCOMING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE:***

- February 9: Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation – Reviewing VA’s Flawed Fiduciary System. Watch live at 10 a.m. at [Veterans.House.Gov](https://www.veterans.house.gov).