

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
BUDGET  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,  
AND PENSIONS  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

November 11, 2015

Dear Friends,

Although every day we should remember the great sacrifices of those who serve our country, today on Veterans Day we renew our commitment and reverence of those who put their lives on the line to protect our freedom. As the daughter of a World War II veteran, I want to share with you some ideas about what this day means to me, and how we can fulfill the promise we make to those who wear the uniform.

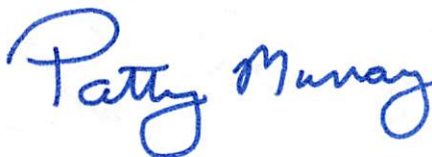
Veterans Day is a time to recommit to the idea that when brave individuals signed up to serve our country, we agreed to take care of them. They kept their end of the bargain and we must keep ours. And that includes doing everything we can to provide access to health services, mental health support, housing, and job training – for the veterans of both today and tomorrow. We are facing a pivotal moment in veterans care as the war in Afghanistan continues to wind down, and veterans will continue to need care for many years ahead. It's time that we step up and call on our nation's leaders to act.

While Congress passed a sweeping bill last year to provide new resources and add more accountability to the VA, I remain very concerned about persistently high wait times, inconsistency in care, and system-wide inefficiency, and, in my role as a senior member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am committed to finding solutions. Our veterans have already fought for our country, they shouldn't have to fight to get the health care or benefits they were promised, so we've got to fight on their behalf. I am also fighting to end the VA's outdated ban on fertility services for veterans who sustained injuries in battle so that they can start families, and to extend the critically important military caregiver support services program to veterans of all eras through S.1085, the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act.

We have so much work left to do, and today I challenge everyone to live up to the promise made to the millions of Americans who have served. This is the responsibility we all have on our shoulders. It doesn't end on the battlefield. It doesn't end after the Veterans Day parades. In fact, it never ends. We need to do better, Congress needs to do better, and I believe we can.

I'm proud to be a voice in the U.S. Senate for the 600,000 veterans living in Washington state. Please accept my heartfelt gratitude to all of our veterans and servicemembers, and my best wishes to those gathered today to honor our nation's heroes.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray  
United States Senator

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