

Dear Friend,

Last week, I [joined American Legion Post 67 at their 21st annual Memorial Day observance](#) to honor the service of our nation's veterans. It was both a wonderful commemoration and an important reminder of the ongoing debt we owe these men and women. Today, over 750,000 veterans call North Carolina home, and more are joining them. As America's newest generation of veterans returns from Afghanistan and Iraq, we must ensure that our nation honors its commitment to all who have served.

[*How my office can help with VA claims*](#)

The House recently passed the annual funding bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and it is now in the process of considering the Department of Defense (DoD) funding bill. I am pleased to report that they build on the progress made in the last 5 years, when Democrats spearheaded a 70 per cent increase in funding for veterans health care and other benefits. The 2013 VA and DoD funding bills will again provide robust funding for research, medical care, and facilities for veterans. In particular, the VA bill includes full funding for the Obama Administration's effort to end homelessness among veterans by the middle of this decade and provides much-needed funding for research on, and treatment of, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury.

The Defense and VA bills permit modest increases in TRICARE pharmacy co-pays, but they do not make the across-the-board TRICARE fee increases proposed by the Pentagon, and would peg future co-pay increases to cost-of-living adjustments. They also push DoD and the VA to complete the adoption of new, shared information technology systems designed to reduce the VA claims backlog.

In addition to making sure veterans don't have to endure extended waits for their promised health care and other benefits, we need to do more to help them transition to civilian life, including a well-paying job. Congress has passed the VOW to Hire Heroes Act to do just that. The new law is designed to create better private sector opportunities for veterans. It provides tax credits to companies that hire out-of-work veterans, expands veterans education and training opportunities, and improves the VA's transitioning programs. Since many veterans seek federal civil service jobs after leaving the military, the law allows service members to acquire

veteran's preference status prior to discharge. The law will complement the Administration's newly-launched [Veterans Jobs Bank](#) , which serves as a comprehensive resource of private sector opportunities available to veterans.

The public sector should also be a great source of jobs for veterans, whose military skills and training can be readily translated into a number of crucial civilian functions. As the ranking member on the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, I've encouraged the Obama Administration to promote the hiring of veterans by local fire departments. Our 2013 funding bill would give preference to localities hiring veterans in awarding Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants, which help communities cover the cost of hiring and retaining first responders. The bill also directs the Department of Homeland Security to work with the VA and DoD to develop a plan to put veterans to work in new positions needed to improve our nation's cybersecurity.

These are just a few of the proposals Congress has considered to support veterans. For a more complete list of bills I've sponsored to address these and other issues facing our nation's veterans, visit my [Military and Veterans webpage here](#) . If you have a question about any other issue, or need help filing a claim related to veterans benefits, please do not hesitate to call my office or [send me an email](#) .

Sincerely,

David Price

Member of Congress