

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule and the underlying bill, the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act.

Improvements in medical technology over the years allow for more servicemen and women to survive injuries sustained in battle. During World War II, for every soldier killed, two were injured. Now, this ratio is up to sixteen-to-one. These incredible medical developments allow many more men and women to return home to their families, but their injuries tend to be much more serious, and in many cases, require additional care for the rest of their lives.

Last month, I had the opportunity to visit with wounded soldiers recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I met a several young men wounded in Iraq, one a constituent of mine from Upstate New York. As I stood there next to one of the soldier's mother, I saw a look of sadness on her face, and at that point it struck me – what if one of my two teenage children were lying in that bed? I would want the absolute best treatment and care for my children – and our brave troops deserve nothing less.

Sadly, the Administration's mismanagement of the War in Iraq has extended to the home front. The selfless men and women who volunteered to defend their country have been callously neglected, and were not only sent into battle without adequate resources, they also returned home to inadequate resources. And when they asked for help, no one answered.

We make a promise to our soldiers to provide for them when they return from battle. It is absolutely unacceptable that this promise has been broken.

The Wounded Warrior Assistance Act will ensure that the more than 25,000 service members who have sustained injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan receive the world-class treatment, care, and services they so bravely earned. This bill creates an efficient system for the transition of records from the Department of Defense to the Veterans Administration. It establishes a support system of counselors, advocates, and case managers to ensure timely, comprehensive care. And it establishes a number to call to report problems in facilities so that when a soldier asks for help, someone answers.

Mr. Speaker, our men and women in uniform deserve the absolute best care this nation has to offer. I urge my colleagues to renew our promise to our veterans by supporting this rule and the underlying bill.

Thank you, I yield back the balance of my time.

###