

Washington, DC -- In the week leading up to Memorial Day, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) joined a bipartisan majority in the U.S. House of Representatives to pass legislation to improve benefits and services for our nation's veterans. On Thursday, Arcuri voted to provide \$1.9 billion more for military health care at Walter Reed and other hospitals and \$1.8 billion more for veterans' health care to address the needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

"During this time of conflict, Memorial Day is a time to honor and respect our veterans and troops serving valiantly around the world," said Arcuri. "The 110th Congress is deeply committed to providing for the unique and variable needs of our nations' veterans and service members. From \$1.8 billion in additional funding for veterans' health care, to increased oversight of hospitals like Walter Reed, and a pay raise for military families – I am proud to have joined Republicans and Democrats to pass legislation that will help provide veterans and service members with the care they have earned and deserve."

Yesterday evening, Arcuri voted for \$1.9 billion for military health care and \$1.8 billion for veterans' health care above what the President has requested, as well as:

- \$410 million to prevent health care fee increases for our troops.
- \$20 million to address the problems at Walter Reed.
- \$900 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury care and research.
- \$229 million for treating the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.
- \$100 million for mental health care for veterans.

Veterans Legislation passed by the House of Representatives earlier this week:

- Traumatic Brain Injury/Rural Veterans Outreach (H.R. 2199): Ensures that our veterans are properly screened for Traumatic Brain Injury and receive the appropriate treatment. More than half of combat casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan have associated brain injuries, often due to improvised explosive devices. The legislation also expands VA resources to provide rural communities with "mobile vet centers" for mental health services and benefits outreach.

- Returning Servicemember VA Healthcare Insurance Act (H.R. 612): Helps ensure soldiers with mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder that are often not immediately diagnosed are treated by making veterans eligible for health care due to combat service for five years after leaving active duty.
- Veterans Outreach Improvement Act (H.R. 67): Allows the VA to partner with state and local governments to reach out to veterans and their families in ensuring they receive the benefits they have earned.
- Early Access to Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits Act (H.R. 2239): Extends eligibility for rehabilitation benefits from the Veterans' Affairs Department.
- Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act (H.R. 1470): Requires that chiropractic care and services be provided to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

The Defense Department Authorization Bill (H.R. 1585), supported by Arcuri and passed by the House last week, included a pay raise of 3.5 percent for all service members. This pay raise would put \$7.3 billion into the paychecks of men and women in uniform over the next five years.

In March, Arcuri voted with a bipartisan majority to pass the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act (H.R. 1538), which would ensure that wounded service members receive the highest quality care as well as increase the efficiency and accountability of the Veterans' Administration (VA) health care system.

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