

Eighth District Veterans Report

from U.S. Representative Bill Posey

Dear Friend,

We owe our nation's military veterans a great debt of gratitude, and we, as a nation, have an obligation to keep the promises made to our men and women in uniform. It's the responsibility of this country to make sure that our veterans are cared for while they are actively serving and in their retirement. Without the dedication of



Rep. Posey talks legislative issues with WWII veterans during a recent Honor Flight.

our service members, who have made the conscious decision to make great personal sacrifices – up to and including giving their lives in defense of our nation – it would not be possible to hold on to our freedoms throughout the years.

It's important for Washington to do all it can to ensure that veterans get the quality care and customer experience they deserve. If you know of any veteran in our community who is having trouble with VA services, feel free to reach out to them and encourage them to contact my office in Brevard County at 321-632-1776 or Indian

River County 772-226-1701. In fact, please call us if you are having trouble with any federal agency – the VA, the Social Security Administration, Medicare or even the IRS. My staff and I are here to serve you.

Sincerely,

Bill
Bill Posey

"It's important for Washington to do all it can to ensure that veterans get the quality care and customer experience they deserve." – Rep. Bill Posey

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POSEY'S LEGISLATIVE

STRENGTHENING VETERANS BENEFITS PROGRAMS

- ✓ **VA ID Card** – Cosponsored legislation signed into law enabling veterans to obtain identification cards from the Department of Veterans Affairs. (*Public Law 114-31*)
- ✓ **Services for Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans** – Granting presumptive coverage for Agent Orange if serving within 12 miles offshore in Vietnam. (*Cosponsored H.R. 969*)
- ✓ **Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Relief Act** – Allows a surviving spouse of a veteran who has a service-connected disability rating of less than 100% to retain the veteran's small business status through the VA's "Vets First" program for up to three years following the veteran's death. (*Voted for H.R. 1313*)
- ✓ **Meeting the Needs of Surviving Spouses** – Ending the practice of reducing Survivor Benefit Program benefits by the amount received in Dependence and Indemnity Compensation. (*Cosponsored H.R. 1594*)
- ✓ **Housing for Reservists** – Cosponsored H.R. 4941, which prorates the Monthly Housing Allowance until the month's end for Reservists who are also full-time students using their 9/11 benefits and get called to active duty.



Rep. Posey questions VA officials about problems with the Veterans Choice Program in a recent hearing of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

HELPING VETERANS TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

- ✓ **Helping Homeless Veterans Get Back on Their Feet** – Supported the *Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act (H.R. 474)*. This legislation has two goals: to assist veterans in achieving meaningful employment and to help fight homelessness among our nation's veterans.
- ✓ **Increasing Affordable Housing Options for Veterans** – Supported the *Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act (H.R. 1816)*, which makes important changes to exclude payments made by the VA to veterans' health-care providers from counting toward the veterans' gross income for purposes of determining eligibility for Section 8 voucher and public housing programs.
- ✓ **Assisting Veterans Transitioning from Military Jobs to Civilian Jobs** – Voted for passage of the *Veterans Skills to Jobs Act* requiring federal agencies to accept military training as sufficient to satisfy training or certification requirements for federal licenses. (*Public Law 112-147*)
- ✓ **Increasing Veteran Employment Opportunities** – Supported H.R. 1382, which gives preference to government contractors who employ veterans on a full-time basis and disqualifies contractors who misrepresent their veteran status.
- ✓ **Veterans Employment** – Selected by U.S. House of Representatives to participate in the Wounded Warrior employee program to hire a post-9/11 wounded warrior.
- ✓ **Service Dogs** – Cosponsored the *PAWS Act (Puppies Assisting Wounded Service Members Act)* to create a pilot program that would provide service dogs to select veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Legislation Advances to Provide Justice for American Heroes

On February 13, 2003, four Americans on a U.S. counter-narcotics mission were captured by the FARC, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization in Colombia that controls the majority of the world's cocaine traffic. After the pilot was executed at the crash site, the three survivors were held captive in the jungle for 5 1/2 years. These Americans have obtained a court judgment under the Anti-Terrorism Act for damages against the FARC to compensate them for the terrible acts they experienced during their captivity. However, the only FARC assets in the U.S. are drug monies of FARC agents – the traffickers and money launderers – which now sit in accounts that have been blocked under the *Kingpin Act*.

The House Judiciary Committee approved Rep. Posey's bipartisan legislation (H.R. 3394, the *CAPTIVE Act*) to allow these heroes and other victims of terrorism to collect such blocked assets as compensation awarded through court judgments. More and more terrorist groups like ISIS, the FARC, Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram are financed by revenue from the global drug trade. This bill would allow the funds seized from terrorists' drug operations currently blocked under the *Kingpin Act* to be used to satisfy the judgments won by their American victims. Posey said the *CAPTIVE Act* is an important step forward in holding terrorist groups accountable and providing justice to their American victims.

Read more about my record on other imp

AGENDA FOR VETERANS

UPDATE: Military Regiment Awarded Congressional Gold Medal

In a historic ceremony in Emancipation Hall in the U.S. Capitol, veteran soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the "Borinqueneers," were formally recognized with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award that Congress can bestow. On June 10, 2014, the President signed into law bipartisan, bicameral legislation introduced by Rep. Posey to recognize the service and sacrifices made by these brave American soldiers.

The 65th Infantry Regiment was created by Congress in 1898 as an all-Puerto Rican segregated unit, was called upon to serve our nation in World War I, World War II and the Korean War and became known as the Borinqueneers. During the now-famous Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War, the Borinqueneers fought alongside the First Marine Division, covering them through what is recognized as one of the greatest strategic withdrawals in military history.

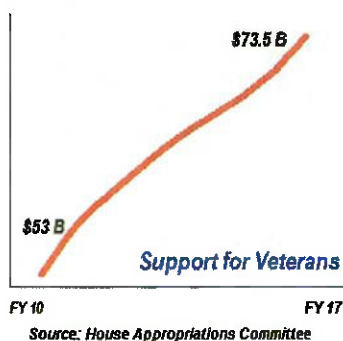


Rep. Posey discusses his Congressional Gold Medal legislation with veterans at the Korean War Memorial in Washington D.C.

House Boosts Funding for Veterans Programs

This year's House VA appropriations bill continues the fight to provide better customer service, health care, training and other earned benefits to our nation's military veterans by increasing funding for veterans programs by 3 percent over last year's levels to \$73.5 billion. VA medical services are funded at \$52.5 billion, which will enable care

for 7 million patients next year. The House plan provides additional funding to address health care needs such as treatment of hepatitis C, long-term care for veterans, support services for caregivers of veterans, and to fight homelessness among veterans and their families.



- ✓ **VA Electronic Health Records** – Ensures timely and accurate exchange of medical data between the VA, DOD and the private sector.
- ✓ **Disability Claims Processing Backlog** – Includes funding for paperless claims processing, digital scanning of health records, and for centralized mail.
- ✓ **Claims Appeals** – Increases funding for the Board of Veteran Appeals by 29 percent over FY 2016 level to support new staff to tackle higher numbers of claims appeals.
- ✓ **Accountability** – Requires rigorous reporting requirements to track each regional office's performance on claims processing, stops taxpayer-funded rewards to bad employees and prohibits raises for all senior managers.

House Passes Key Veterans Legislation

To continue the fight to improve benefits and services for our nation's military veterans, the House of Representatives passed several pieces of legislation supported by Rep. Posey which will reform construction of new VA facilities, rescue failing ones, and expand access to mental health and rehabilitation services.

- ✓ Authorizing construction of new VA facilities and installing an Inspector General to investigate cost overruns and keep construction projects on schedule. (H.R. 3106)
- ✓ Dispatching emergency teams to quickly rescue and turn around failing VA facilities. (H.R. 3234)
- ✓ Providing better mental health care options for female veterans and expanding access to mental health services for veterans who served in classified missions or sensitive units. (H.R. 2915)



- ✓ Strengthening the VA's wellness and rehabilitation programs to treat veterans who have developed dependencies on pain medications and other drugs used to treat their injuries. (H.R. 4063)

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Rep. Posey's Personal Accountability Checklist

Rep. Posey believes that he should lead by example, and here's how he's doing it:

- ✓ Has returned the pay raise (that was approved before Rep. Posey came to Congress in 2009) every year. Also returned full pay for service during federal government shutdown.
- ✓ Opposed Congressional pay increases.
- ✓ Introduced legislation requiring at least 72 hours for the public and Congress to review bills before a House floor vote can take place. (Adopted as Three-Day Rule Reform, 2011)
- ✓ Cosponsored and voted for the STOCK Act to ensure that Members of Congress don't trade stocks based on insider information. (P.L. 112-105)
- ✓ Filed an amendment to stop sweetheart investment deals that enable Members of Congress to participate in Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) not available to the general public. (H.R. 3606)
- ✓ Cut his own office budget by more than \$650,000 while in office.
- ✓ Proposed ending the Congressional death gratuity so that Members of Congress are required to purchase their own life insurance rather than getting a taxpayer handout when they die. (H.R. 3127)
- ✓ Introduced bipartisan legislation banning Members of Congress from lobbying for 5 years after leaving office (H.R. 318) and to eliminate their federal benefits if they choose to lobby. (H.R. 319)
- ✓ Voted to cut Congressional pensions. (H.R. 3630)



Congressman Posey and his Staff are Here to **Serve Veterans**



Rep. Posey greets veterans and delivers a legislative update at the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery.

Rep. Posey and his staff are here to help veterans navigate federal agencies, to assist in obtaining medals and securing Defense Department records, and to help veterans address concerns with the VA.

If you know of any veteran in our community who is having trouble with VA services, feel free to reach out to them and encourage them to contact our office in Viera (321-632-1776), Titusville (321-383-6090) or Vero Beach (772-226-1701).

"I am so grateful to you for your assistance in resolving the matter of my pension with the VA. I can now retire in my home rather than going into a facility for care." – Melbourne Constituent

"I want to thank you for your letter and the awards. My great grandchildren will appreciate knowing about the ten medals I received for my service during World War II and the Korean War." – Vero Beach Constituent