

This Congress made a promise to leave no veteran behind, and every day we continue to fulfill that promise. It is our duty to serve the brave men and women in uniform that serve our country.

This week, the House voted to ensure that veterans and their families get the care and support they need and deserve after they put their lives on the line defending our country. The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act will reform and improve veterans' health services by supporting wounded veterans and their families and caregivers, expanding care for female veterans, improving mental health services, and increasing access to health care for veterans in rural areas.

To address the unique needs of the growing number of returning women soldiers, this bill will improve health services for almost 2 million female veterans. With this legislation, the VA will be able to provide care for female veterans' newborns for the first time in history. It will also improve access to care for veterans in rural areas, ensure that the VA can better treat veterans suffering from mental health issues, and provide the VA with resources to learn more about the tragically high suicide rate among veterans. This legislation will also support family members and caregivers who look after our injured veterans to bring them the relief they deserve.

The bill passed builds on a record of accomplishments for veterans and troops over the last three years under the Democratic-led Congress – including the new G.I. Bill to provide returning troops with the promise of a college education; historic investments in veterans' health care and providing that funding one year in advance to prevent political or legislative delays; expanding economic opportunities for returning soldiers and improving care for those with PTSD.

Our soldiers serve with honor and when they come home, they deserve the best services we can offer. That's why we've made historic investments to improve veterans' health care, raised our troops' salaries and helped smooth their transition back from the battlefield. This bill will ensure that we can address the changing medical needs of our veterans and that all our veterans have full access to quality health care.

The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act is also supported by a broad coalition of veterans groups including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Wounded Warriors Project and the National Military Family Association.

We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude – and this bill represents an understanding that the sacrifices of our veterans are shared among us all as Americans. It is my hope that the bill will soon be signed into law by the President.