

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer was named one of the American Legion's "Unsung Heroes" of the 108th Congress last evening. National Commander John Brieden presented Rep. Hoyer with the organization's Unsung Hero Award during the Legion's 44th Annual Washington Conference on Capitol Hill. A delegation of Maryland Legionnaires joined Rep. Hoyer and the elected leader of the nation's largest veterans organization.

"I am deeply honored and proud to have been chosen by the American Legion to receive this award," said Congressman Hoyer. "We have seen the benefits and services for veterans whittled away over the years, but I can assure you that I fight and speak out to make sure that we meet the commitment we guaranteed our veterans.

"But it takes more than rhetoric to accomplish this; it takes action. I appreciate being joined today by Commander Brieden and members of the American Legion from Maryland who are here in Washington working to make sure that the appropriate action is being taken to recognize America's veterans who have served with honor and deserve the benefits they have earned," Hoyer concluded.

"The 108th Congress passed a record increase in Department of Veterans Affairs health care funding for the current fiscal year, and it reduced the number of service-disabled military retirees subject to a 'disability tax' on their retired pay," Brieden said. "By old-fashioned grass-roots advocacy, the men and women of The American Legion fought hard for this legislation. I commend Representative Hoyer for taking a leadership role in making that happen."

**The citation praises Rep. Hoyer for his efforts to ensure that veterans' health care is affordable and accessible, and his support for investment in the programs and services veterans deserve:** "For commendable leadership on the issue of concurrent receipt of military retired pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for thousands of disabled military retirees. In addition, was in the forefront of legislators who sought increases in VA's discretionary budget, to allow the Department to adequately meet the needs of this nation's veterans, their spouses and dependents. This effort continues to demonstrate a commitment to America's veterans and their families."

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