

**WASHINGTON, DC** - Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) released the following statement today in recognition of Memorial Day and to make note of actions taken by the 110<sup>th</sup>

Congress to boost medical funding for veterans and increase support for soldiers and military families. Congressman Hoyer will observe Memorial Day at the Ridge Memorial Day parade in St. Mary's County, Maryland from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

"As we observe the Memorial Day holiday, let us be reminded of the simple, yet apt words of Elmer Davis, Director of the U.S. Office of War Information during WWII: *"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."*

"The weight of those words has profound impact, particularly during a time of war. This Memorial Day we remember the more than 4,000 courageous men and women who have died in Iraq and the 500 we have lost in Afghanistan - 77 altogether from the State of Maryland. Our thoughts are also with the 32,000 soldiers wounded in these conflicts, and the family and friends struck by the loss or pain of a loved one or missing someone who is far from home.

"And while we mourn the loss of those that have made the ultimate sacrifice throughout our nation's history, we are comforted by an abiding faith in the fact that they did not die in vain, and that the legacy they have left for future generations is something that will flourish for centuries to come.

"On this Memorial Day, we must also renew our efforts to keep our promises to those still with us. That is why supporting our troops, military families and veterans has been - and will always be - a top Congressional priority.

"Building on the success of last year's historical funding increase for the Veterans Administration - the largest in the 77-year history of the department - Congress has again included a substantial 11 percent increase in this year's budget for veterans.

"In addition, we have passed \$1.3 billion in tax relief for military families, approved several measures to strengthen veterans' health services, and passed a Defense Authorization bill that begins to restore our military readiness and boosts pay raises for our troops by 3.9 percent.

## Hoyer Memorial Day Tribute

May 22, 2008

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"And Democrats in Congress continue to fight for a GI Bill to provide our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan the promise of a full, four-year education. Such action is long overdue. I hope that President Bush and other opponents of current efforts to pass a GI Bill in the Supplemental bill reconsider their position and grant our veterans the future they deserve."

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