

*Specific Efforts Taken in 110th Congress Reflect Commitment to Our Men and Women of Service*

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**(Washington, D.C.)** Today, U.S. Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) honors our nation's brave soldiers by renewing his commitment to ensure that all returning servicemen and women have access to quality healthcare, opportunities to succeed in civilian careers and benefits for their families.

Gutierrez proudly served on the House Veteran's Affairs Committee for 14 years, and during his tenure he worked to ensure that all of our veterans are treated with the level of honor and respect worthy of their sacrifice.

"Too often our veterans--who face immense dangers and often suffer devastating wounds while defending our freedoms-- return home to face inadequate healthcare, limited financial opportunities and backlogs to accessing the benefits they deserve; this is simply not acceptable," said Rep. Gutierrez. "I am proud to have taken steps in Congress to improve benefits for our brave veterans and ensure that we do not stand by as they suffer neglect in return for their service."

In the 110th Congress, Congressman Gutierrez supported and helped pass into law a \$12 billion increase in funding for the VA, which will provide necessary maintenance for VA health care facilities, reduce the claims backlog for veterans accessing benefits and increase access to quality care for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, this law provides special provisions for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic

Brain Injuries.

Congressman Gutierrez also proudly supported a new GI Bill for the 21st Century. This legislation grants full, four-year scholarships to veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a 40 percent increase over current benefit levels. To assist veterans' transition into civilian life, this Congress also included provisions in the Comprehensive Housing Package to increase home ownership opportunities for veterans by extending the foreclosure ban from three to nine months and improving loan limits.

On July 31 2008, the House passed a bill introduced by Congressman Gutierrez to amend Title 38 of the U.S. Code to repeal the provision terminating the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. This advisory committee is made up of minority veterans and advises Congress on issues that minority veterans face. This bill is essential to ensure the continuity of a valuable voice for minority veterans.

"Today on Veterans day and in all may days in Congress, I will continue to support the men and women who serve our country so selflessly and tirelessly," said Rep. Gutierrez. "Their historic contribution to our nation is invaluable."

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