

Vote to Eliminate Tax Cuts for Millionaires to Fund Improvements to Veterans' Healthcare

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ATTENTION VETERANS

Veterans in New Jersey are encouraged to re-apply for additional disability compensation through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA is contacting veterans in New Jersey, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

For more information, please call 1-800-827-1000 or visit www.vba.va.gov/SpecialOutreach.

But Republican Majority Instead Passed Tax Cuts for America's Super-Rich While Under-funding Veterans' Healthcare

(Washington, DC)—Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted this week to eliminate a small portion of the tax cut for individuals making over \$1 million and use those funds to improve veterans' healthcare programs. The vote took place during a House Appropriations Committee meeting on the spending bill for veterans' services. Unfortunately, the Republican Majority on this Committee instead passed a bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that fails to provide veterans the healthcare they deserve.

"President Bush's 2007 budget proposes that we spend more on tax cuts for the highest-income individuals, the top one percent of Americans, than we do on the entire Veterans' Affairs Department," said Rothman. "I believe that virtually all tax cuts for people making over \$1 million a year — during a time of war, record deficits, and spending cuts for veterans and the middle- and working-class — are the wrong priority for America. Still, even if we reduced the \$42,000 tax cut President Bush wants to give people making more than \$1 million to \$40,000, we would be able to fully meet the needs of our nation's brave veterans. Yet, the Republican Majority on my Committee couldn't even do that."

Specifically, Rothman voted for a series of Democratic proposals to provide \$2.6 billion in additional funding that veterans groups say are needed for VA healthcare. These improvements to the 2007 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill would have funded mental health and prosthetics care, medical and prosthetic research, and additional VA staff to help facilities meet increased workloads.

However, Republicans on the Committee rejected the amendments, which would have been paid for by rolling back some of the tax benefits passed for the wealthiest Americans. The vote came the same day House Republicans passed a five-year, nearly \$70 billion bill to extend President Bush's tax cuts for millionaires. The tiny percentage of households (0.02%) making over \$1 million will receive an average tax cut of \$42,000 while the average middle-income household will receive a tax cut of \$20, according to the Urban Institute-Brookings Institution Tax Policy Center.

"Today's vote is another clear example of how the current Majority in Congress has the wrong priorities," added Rothman. "As more soldiers return home from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we must improve and expand VA healthcare programs to keep up with demand, not give billions of dollars more in tax cuts to America's super-rich."

Read more about Rothman's efforts on behalf of veterans.

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