

Rothman Gets House To Endorse Expansion Of Bergen County Veterans Facility

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Works With Colleague To Secure Congressional Support
For New Addition To Paramus Vets Home

Washington, DC - In an effort to provide Bergen County veterans with an improved skilled nursing facility, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today announced that he has gotten the U.S. House of Representatives to endorse the expansion of the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home. Rothman worked with his colleague, Congressman Rob Andrews (D-NJ1), to have language placed in the final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2004 that encourages the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to favorably review the State of New Jersey's application next year for a federal grant to expand the veterans home.

"Throughout the toughest times in our nation's history, our heroic veterans were there for us - putting their lives on the line so that their fellow Americans could continue to live in peace and freedom. Now, we have an opportunity to say thank you and provide our veterans with a larger facility in Paramus that will improve their quality of life," Rothman said. "An expanded Paramus Veterans Memorial Home will allow hundreds of Bergen County veterans to hold activities together in a much more comfortable, accommodating, and modern facility. Just like our current troops, when it comes to supporting our veterans, Americans speak with a unified voice of support and admiration. I am delighted that I was able to help secure this provision that puts the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home on track for a federal grant."

Andrews said, "I am pleased to have worked with Congressman Rothman to include this favorable language. It is a step toward improving the living conditions of the heroic veterans who live in the Veterans Home in Paramus. They deserve the best that we can provide and I am personally thankful for their service."

The Paramus Veterans Memorial Home, which is one of three New Jersey state veterans extended care facilities, is a long-term care skilled nursing facility which services 336 low-income veterans. The facility lacks available resident programming space and is seeking federal support for the construction of a multi-purpose room that will permit the full community, including family members, to participate in social activities and special events. Currently, resident activities take place in dining areas, which have limited physical space and cannot accommodate the resident population. These dining areas are available for less than two hours daily because of their use before, during, and after meals.

Due to the cramped space, many of the popular special events, including holiday meals and Veterans Day and Memorial Day observances, leave residents and family members watching from outside the entrances because of inadequate seating space. In addition, because of the lack of community space, in order to recognize the efforts and contributions of supporting veterans organizations on an annual basis, the Home must rent a social hall. Construction of the multi-purpose room expansion is estimated to cost \$1.5 million.

"While this measure clears the way for our heroic veterans in Bergen County to receive the federal funds they need to expand the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home, it also will help spare local property and state taxpayers from having to pick up the full cost," Rothman said.

The language endorsing the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home is part of the final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2004. The Senate is expected to approve the measure after the holidays in January. The measure then moves to the White House where President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law.

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