

## Rothman Backs New Measures Helping Veterans

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### Rothman Backs New Measures Helping Veterans \$6.6 Billion for GI College Benefits, Disability Payments, and Aid for Homeless Vets

Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today hailed Congress's recent passage of three measures he has been supporting that will provide a \$6.6 billion increase in veterans benefits. The measures will boost the Montgomery GI Bill college benefit by 51 percent, increase compensation payments for disabled veterans by \$2.5 billion, and provide \$1 billion to help end chronic homelessness among veterans. President Bush is expected to sign the measures into law in the coming days.

"As our nation goes through one of the most difficult times in its history, we draw strength, inspiration and hope from our heroic veterans who served this country in previous wars with distinction," Rothman said. "We must live up to our obligation to provide our veterans with the benefits that they were promised and deserve. These men and women risked their lives to defend the freedom, democracy, and security that define our great nation."

Rothman cheered the passage of the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001, which will boost the levels of education aid provided to veterans under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB). The measure expands payments to veterans who were in active service for at least two years, and restores educational assistance entitlement to veterans who have received benefits for courses that were interrupted by an active-duty call-up or assignment relocation.

Additionally, the bill increases the rates of Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance.

Rothman also applauded the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001, which focuses on the elimination of chronic homelessness among veterans. The nearly \$1 billion measure provides an increase in low-income housing vouchers to help move homeless veterans off the streets, and provides an array of services including medical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and job training to at-risk veterans.

Under the third bill, the Veterans' Compensation Rate Amendments of 2001, disabled veterans and their survivors would receive a 2.6 percent cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), boosting payments over the next five years. The COLA increase to veterans is the same one that will be provided to Social Security recipients.

"These important benefits will help our veterans and improve their quality of life," Rothman said. "Providing educational and disability benefits to our heroes, along with helping to ensure they have a roof over their heads, is the least that we can do to thank them for their service to our country."

Rothman has been a strong advocate of veterans throughout his three terms in Congress, representing New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District. Most recently, he was a cosponsor of the legislation that created the Veterans History Project -- a program designed to collect and preserve audio and video recorded histories from veterans across the nation to share with future generations of Americans.

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