



United States Senator
Richard Shelby
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



Honoring Our Nation's Veterans

By: Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)

November 11th is the day the guns fell silent in World War I, ending the "War to End All Wars." It is also the day we stop to honor those who have selflessly served and sacrificed for our nation.

This Saturday, November 11th is Veterans' Day – a day to reflect upon and celebrate the contributions of all those who have served our nation in the United States military. More than 25 million Americans have worn the uniform of our armed forces. During war and peace, at home and abroad, these patriotic servicemembers have served and sacrificed on behalf of our country. Many have paid the ultimate price, and many others bear the permanent scars of war, both seen and unseen. On this day, we must remember those who fought so valiantly and sacrificed so much, and we must remember those who continue the fight to preserve our legacy of freedom and liberty.

Throughout our nation's history, America's veterans have fought for the security of our country and for stability, safety, and freedom around the globe. Our armed forces have toppled tyrants, defended the innocent, and sought justice for the oppressed. Our servicemembers have engaged the enemy on many fronts and confronted grave dangers to defend the United States. As our armed forces continue this legacy today, their great achievements, courage, and honor are etched in our hearts and minds – and in our history.

We owe our servicemembers our gratitude, but we also owe them our commitment. It is our duty to ensure that they receive the federal benefits and services that they have earned in defense of our nation and our freedom. To that end, I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Commit-

tee to make certain that we honor the commitments we have made to our veterans and their families. This year, the Senate's Appropriations Committee passed the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. This bill increases the Department of Veterans Affairs budget by \$6.45 billion dollars to \$77.9 billion, increases veterans' healthcare funding by 12 percent, and prevents any proposed additional enrollment fees for TRICARE or increased co-payments for pharmaceuticals dispensed through the TRICARE retail pharmacy program.

To date, over a quarter of a million veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have been discharged from Active Duty. Nearly 50,000 of these veterans have sought treatment through the Veterans Administration. It is essential that we fully meet our responsibilities to the veterans of this nation. Whether it is providing them adequate health care or ensuring they receive education and employment services as they transition from military to civilian life, the last thing our servicemembers in combat should have to worry about is whether the nation will provide them the benefits they have earned.

On Veteran's Day, the nation pays tribute to the men and women who have served and who are currently serving our nation in uniform. We are all in debt to those who have defended our country's liberty and freedom. The members of the United States armed forces willingly face grave dangers for each and every one of us. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines define the true meaning of the word patriot. On this day, to all those who serve and have served, a grateful nation says thank you.

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