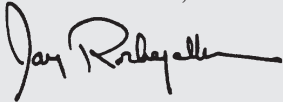


# SENATOR JAY ROCKEFELLER'S REPORT TO WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS

Dear Friends,

Over the past year, Congress has been working hard to make progress on many issues that are important to West Virginia veterans—such as accessible health care, improving educational opportunities and increasing resources for local businesses. Each and every day, caseworkers in my offices are spending time with West Virginia veterans to hear their stories, learn more about their unique needs and circumstances, and do all we can to provide the assistance they need. As West Virginians, we have a very proud and long-standing leadership role in military service – the brave men and women of our great state continually answer the call of duty in sizable numbers, and for their tremendous dedication and commitment, they should have the very best attention. Currently, there are over 200,000 veterans living in West Virginia – veterans who risked their lives for our safety and spent time away from their families, education, and careers to serve our state and our nation. Investing in our veterans – and making sure that their sacrifices will always be honored and never forgotten – is a fight that I have maintained throughout my entire career and I will never give up. By improving the lives of our veterans, our state is helping them pave the way to the bright futures they deserve.

All the best,



Courtesy of Steve Rotsch

## HELP FOR VETERANS WITH PTSD – NEW REGULATIONS

In July, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki made improvements to regulations that will ease the hassle of qualifying for compensation for mental wounds of war. The previous VA regulation required veterans to document a specific event or events that triggered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), such as bomb blasts, mortar attacks or IED incidents, making the claims process lengthy and often unsuccessful. In many instances, finding records to document the traumatic events responsible for PTSD proved to be expensive, time consuming or simply unfeasible. Now, if a VA psychiatrist or psychologist determines that a veteran suffers from PTSD, veterans will not have to complete extensive paperwork. For more information, visit [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000.

## BUILDING A WEST VIRGINIA VETERANS' CEMETERY– HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE

In February, I joined West Virginia veterans and state officials to celebrate the donation of land from Dow Chemical to the State of West Virginia for the Donel Kinnard Memorial State Veterans' Cemetery in southern West Virginia. The land donation will be matched by \$13.5 million in construction costs from the VA. The funding is the highest grant ever awarded from VA for a state cemetery.

A veterans' cemetery is something that many of us have been working toward for a very long time, and we're currently expecting to break ground by the end of the year. This memorial is for our military men and women – who have answered the call of duty with distinction, honor, and courage. I believe our veterans – old and young – deserve nothing less than the opportunity to have their memory preserved with this type of tribute. All of our West Virginia veterans must receive a burial worthy of their service to this country, and this memorial cemetery is about honoring them. I'm so proud that we're moving ahead and look forward to following the project to its completion.

## ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF BECKLEY VAMC AND MERCER COUNTY CBOC

In an extraordinary measure, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, took the first step to authorize and appropriate \$46.55 million in federal funding to construct a new nursing home facility at the Beckley VA Medical Center (VAMC). The Committee approved Chairman Inouye's amendment in honor of the late Senator Byrd. The proposed 90-bed facility, which is nearly double current capacity, will replace the current Community Living Center (CLC). The new Beckley VAMC will also provide specialized areas for expanded Adult Day Health Care, dementia/Alzheimer's care and a separate and dedicated hospice unit.

I am also continuing to work with members of the West Virginia delegation, local veterans and community leaders to establish the Mercer County Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) – to provide accessible health care to our veterans in the southern part of the state. I will continue to support and fight for these needed projects.

## SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION VETERANS ROUNDTABLE AND SUMMIT

In August, the Small Business Administration (SBA) held several roundtables, and in September they're holding a summit, to assist West Virginia veterans who want to start a business. Currently, there are approximately 200,000 veterans in West Virginia and 6,000 veteran-owned businesses – this is fantastic, but I know that we can build on that success. Veterans are disciplined, dedicated critical thinkers, and we would all be honored to have vets running more of our state's small businesses. For more information on the SBA and resources for veterans, please visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – WHAT CONGRESS IS DOING FOR VETERANS

### ADDITIONAL CARE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

To address a number of issues related to veterans' health care, U.S. Senate Bill 1963 – *The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010* – was signed into law this May. The Act will improve care for our severely injured veterans by providing their caregivers with training, counseling, supportive services and a living stipend. It also expands health care services for women veterans, allows reimbursement for emergency care at non-VA facilities, and improves mental health and medical services.

### THE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL – EXPANDING COVERAGE FOR VETERANS

The recently passed health care reform bill makes certain our veterans will have access to the health care coverage they need and deserve. Veterans currently eligible for VA health care will remain eligible under health reform; nothing in the new law will affect veterans' access to their current care. The new law also preserves TRICARE and TRICARE for Life Benefits. There is no provision in health care reform that will increase co-pays, change eligibility, or in any way modify how TRICARE is administered. In addition, there will now be more affordable coverage options, improved benefit plans and stable health care choices for veterans not enrolled in the VA health care system. For more information, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000.

### UPDATE ON POST-9/11 VETERANS GI BILL

The veterans community reached an extraordinary milestone in 2008 with the passage of the *Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act*, or Post-9/11 GI Bill. The bill's enhanced education benefits have provided many veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts additional resources for higher education. In July, the state hosted a meeting for all West Virginia colleges to talk about how to make our college campuses "veteran friendly." I invited Dr. Alfonso Batres, Chief Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs Readjustment Counseling Service, to serve as keynote speaker – and we appreciate his attendance so much. In West Virginia our Vet Centers provide the support and readjustment counseling that help veterans transition from combat to college campuses. To find your nearest Vet Center, please visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000.

In August, I attended a Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing where we approved comprehensive legislation to help veterans find jobs, simplify and improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill, make it easier for disabled veterans to get accurate and timely compensation and improve VA health care. The proposed Post-9/11 GI Bill addresses concerns with the current law. It would enhance and simplify the payment formula, ease confusion for students and cut administrative nuisances for schools. The new GI Bill would also be opened to at least 80,000 National Guard members, mobilized since 9/11, who previously were denied coverage. Additionally, its monthly living allowance would support enrollment in apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs. This bill will now be reported to the full Senate for consideration.

## NEW FUNDING FOR VETERANS FACILITIES

As a result of funding I supported in the Recovery Act this year, West Virginia has received \$16.88 million for veterans' facilities across the state.

**Martinsburg VA Medical Center (VAMC):** \$8.9 million to renovate and upgrade the facility, including installation of Nurse Call systems in inpatient wards and electrical infrastructure updates.

**Clarksburg VAMC:** \$2 million to update the emergency department, dental laboratory, boiler, fire alarm system, inpatient unit and ambulatory surgery suite.

**Beckley VAMC:** \$5.3 million to update the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, replace the steam valve and plumbing, repaint and replace tile and hand-railing.

**Huntington VAMC:** \$590,695 to renovate and upgrade the facility.

## HELP WITH BENEFITS OR CLAIMS FROM ROCKEFELLER'S OFFICE

<u>Beckley</u>	<u>Charleston</u>	<u>Fairmont</u>	<u>Martinsburg</u>
220 North Kanawha St., Ste 1 Beckley, 25801 Ph. (304) 253-9704	405 Capitol St., Ste 508 Charleston, 25301 Ph. (304) 347-5372	118 Adams St., Ste 301 Fairmont, 26554 Ph. (304) 367-0122	217 West King St., Ste 307 Martinsburg, 25401 Ph. (304) 262-9285