

With the observance of Memorial Day at the end of this month, it is important that we remember the more than one million men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice and have died in defense of this great nation. These brave and courageous servicemembers have served our country well by protecting our nation and fighting for America's highest ideals.

Memorial Day reminds us that freedoms come at great costs. In December 2000, Congress passed and the President signed into law the National Moment of Remembrance Act to ensure the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes are never forgotten. The National Moment of Remembrance encourages all Americans to pause wherever they are at 3:00 PM local time on Memorial Day for a minute of silence to remember and honor those who have died in service to the nation.

This month also provides us with the opportunity to honor our nations' veterans and their families by delivering on our responsibilities and promises. To provide for our nation's 25 million veterans, Congress approved and President Bush signed into law an appropriations package for Fiscal Year 2009 to provide \$41 billion for Veterans' Affairs health programs and \$31 billion for veterans' medical services, both of which are a ten percent increase from the previous year.

To further demonstrate gratitude to our nation's veterans, Congress also passed legislation which includes the most sweeping changes in benefits for American veterans under the GI Bill since World War II. This legislation, which was signed into law last year, modernizes the GI Bill to dramatically increase educational benefits to our veterans by providing significant financial assistance to pursue an approved program of study.

During the Global War on Terror, we must also remember our Armed Forces who have taken the fight to the terrorists overseas so that we will not have to face them at home. The actions of these Americans in uniform are another link in the great chain of noble American military service that stretches back to our nation's founding.

To ensure that our nation's active military can more easily communicate with their families while deployed, I have cosponsored bipartisan legislation to give members of the Armed Forces serving in combat operations a free monthly postal benefit they can transfer to their loved ones, who can then send a letter or package at no cost. Members of the Armed Forces could also choose to donate their vouchers to charitable organizations, such as those that send care packages to soldiers.

By defending our country both at home and abroad, our nation's military continually secure our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This month, join me in honoring the sacrifice made by those who have given their lives to spread the blessings of liberty and lay the foundations of peace.

GARY G. MILLER  
Member of Congress