

Keeping Our Promises to America's Veterans

"We have a sacred trust with the veterans who risked their lives so that we may live in freedom. Part of that sacred trust is making sure we provide our veterans with the services and support they need, in combat and at home."

Keeping Medical Care Accessible and Affordable

Senator Mikulski is fighting to make sure veterans have access to the health care they were promised by adding money in the federal checkbook to:

- Fund an estimated \$1.2 billion shortfall in veterans' health care.
- Prevent veterans from being forced to pay increased fees and co-payments for VA, community and state-run long-term care.
- Stop any changes in eligibility requirements for VA, community and state run long-term care.

Fighting for Veterans' Health

Senator Mikulski works hard to make sure the veterans' health care system delivers compassionate and competent care:

- Added \$15 million to the President's 2006 budget request for Veterans' Medical and Prosthetic Research.
- Called on the Veterans' Administration (VA) to establish centers on prosthetics to assist veterans.
- Requested the VA establish at least three Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Centers to handle the needs of returning veterans.
- Worked to secure funds for research into heart disease, prosthetics, spinal cord injuries and unique health needs of veterans.
- Ensured that VA hospitals are fully furnished with the latest medical technology and equipment by providing federal funds for everything from Magnetic Resonance Imagers (MRIs) to wheelchairs.
- Mandated that the VA set up long-term and geriatric care programs to help the VA prepare for its aging population.

Guaranteeing Better Service to Veterans

Senator Mikulski is a strong advocate for improved veterans services and benefits:

- Proposing interim benefits for veterans if the VA does not resolve claims within a specific time period.
- Fights to increase funding for VA medical care and staff to reduce waiting times at VA facilities and backlog of veterans' benefits claims.
- Fought for legislation to increase burial benefits for veterans and to ensure that all veterans have a proper honor guard at their funerals.
- Supports concurrent receipt, which would allow all military retirees who were injured on duty to receive their full retirement and disability benefits.
- Led the fight to pass legislation prohibiting veterans convicted of a federal or state capital offense from receiving burial benefits and funeral honors.

Enhancing Quality of Life

Senator Mikulski supports veterans' quality of life by improving facilities in Maryland:

- Continuing to fight for a replacement nursing facility at the Perry Point Veterans' Medical Center.
- Fighting to create an affordable continuum of care retirement community for veterans at Fort Howard.
- Working to ensure that Maryland's veterans can get convenient care by securing funds for Maryland's community VA clinics in Cumberland, Hagerstown, Fort Howard, Loch Raven, Glen Burnie, Greenbelt, Charlotte Hall, Cambridge and Pocomoke City.
- Helped build Baltimore VA Medical center, the newest and most advanced VA hospital center in the country.
- Supported the Perry Point Veterans' Medical Center's clinical addition, which helps serve the area's 7,500 veterans.

Looking Out for Women Veterans

Senator Mikulski provides for the needs of women veterans:

- Advocates for patient privacy as a requirement in VA hospitals.
- Supporting the establishment of the Vietnam Women's Memorial including authorization of construction on federal land.
- Directed the VA to ensure that quality of care for women veterans is commensurate with private sector standards.
- Fought to extend the Clinical Laboratories Improvement Act to ensure the accuracy of VA lab tests, including pap smears.

