



Presented on Thursday at the 23rd annual Blinded American Veterans Foundation (BAVF) Congressional Awards Reception, the distinguishes Members of Congress who have made significant contributions toward furthering the Foundation's efforts on behalf of sensory disabled American veterans. Bilirakis was honored in conjunction with House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO).

"We're honored to recognize Representatives Skelton and Bilirakis for their steadfast support of veterans rights and services," said John Fales, BAVF President. These national leaders continually stand up for the millions of women and men who have served or are now serving our country, and for their families. The entire veterans community joins us in applauding these heroes for their friendship, trust, and constant devotion to veterans issues."

"I must say that I am deeply humbled to receive this magnificent award," said Bilirakis, member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and Chairman of the GOP Policy Committee's Task Force on Veterans' Affairs. "However, I believe all veterans, servicemembers and their families deserve to be honored for their service to our country, and to that end, I think every veteran shares in this honor."

Awarded annually, previous Gillispie Award recipients have included: Former Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-Fla.), Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.), Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Rep. John McHugh (R-N.Y.), Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.), and Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.).