

Veterans & Military

Congressman Bilirakis specifically requested a seat on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs because he wants to be an advocate for veterans and their families in the United States Congress. He is working to ensure that veterans receive the benefits they have earned through their service to our nation. He also chairs the Republican Policy Committee's Task Force on Veterans' Affairs.

Leading the fight to provide our veterans and service members with the pay and benefits they deserve, Bilirakis has introduced legislation to address the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability, expand the Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) program and increase military pay. Provisions based on his legislation have been incorporated into the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act, which is working its way through the legislative process. In addition, the House passed his "wounded warrior" legislation to ensure that our wounded service members receive the care and services they need.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, he has raised important health care and benefits issues with the VA Secretary and other top VA officials. He supported legislation to increase funding for veterans' health care funding. Specifically, the bill provides \$37.2 billion for veterans' health care programs and creates new programs to help those with traumatic brain injuries and other mental health needs which are among the most common problems facing Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. He has also introduced legislation to create a test mail-order pharmacy program to save military retirees both time and money.

In addition, he is fighting to bring additional health care resources to Florida and the Ninth Congressional District. Since coming to Congress, he has worked with local and national VA officials to expand the Pasco County VA Outpatient Clinic and bring additional health care services, such as dental care, to area veterans. He also has visited the James Haley VA Medical Center (VAMC), meeting with the medical center staff and veterans to discuss the care and services provided at the VAMC.

As a member of the Veterans' Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Bilirakis has also toured the VA Regional Office and met with VA officials to discuss veterans' claims processing issues. He is working with his Subcommittee colleagues improve the claims processing system to reduce the claims backlog and shorten response times.

Congressman Bilirakis also knows that military service does not take place in a vacuum. He has introduced legislation to improve the benefits for veterans' survivors. His Disability Subcommittee conducted a hearing on his legislation to allow the widows of veterans to remarry at age 55 and retain their Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

[Click here](#) to learn more about Congressman Bilirakis efforts as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

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