

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy

April 21, 2010

Statement for the Record

Regarding S. 1963 – the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act

Today, the House will consider an important bill – the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. This legislation will provide much-needed support for our veterans and their families.

According to the Dole/Shalala report, 20% of active duty, 15% of reserve, and 25% of retired and separated members of the military have a family member or friend who has been forced to leave a job to care for the veteran full-time. This places an incredible burden on many, many families across our country.

Today's bill offers an important array of support services for veterans and their caregivers such as: training and education, counseling and mental health services, lodging and subsistence payments for the caregiver when accompanying the veteran on medical care visits, and monthly financial stipends for caregivers. This bill takes important steps towards supporting those individuals who care for our veterans.

The bill also makes important investments in health care for women veterans. Over 1.8 million women have served our country and for too long many of their health care needs have gone unaddressed. This bill builds on the previous efforts of our Congress to correct that inequity.

S. 1963 expands and improves Veterans Administration health care for women by requiring the VA to conduct a study of barriers to women veterans seeking health care, educate and train mental health professionals caring for female veterans with sexual trauma, implement a reintegration and readjustment pilot program aimed at helping women veterans, establish a child care pilot program, and provide post-delivery health care to a new born child of a women veteran.

I support this legislation and our Majority's efforts to support those men and women who have risked their lives for our country.