

MARK TAKANO
41ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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September 26, 2018

Dear Colleague:

As I'm sure you're aware, Veterans Committee Ranking Member Tim Walz is the Democratic nominee for Governor of Minnesota and will not be returning to the House in 2019.

Given the significance of veterans' issues to our caucus, the importance of ensuring continuity of leadership on the committee, and my current role as Vice Ranking Member and the most senior member of the committee, **I am asking for your support to serve as Ranking Member, or Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee in the 116th Congress.**

My family's proud history of military service – and the large community of veterans in my district – has made me acutely aware of the sacrifices our veterans make to defend this nation. As Ranking Member, or Chairman I will help ensure these brave men and women receive the care and support they have earned.

From my early days in Congress, I have made fighting for veterans a top priority. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs was the first committee I chose to join. In my two terms as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, I worked with my Majority counterparts to pass important legislation that protects veterans' access to the education, training, and support they need to secure the future they deserve.

Helping veterans access a career-ready education that leads to a good-paying job will continue to be among my highest priorities for the Committee. While timely and quality medical care is fundamental to supporting veterans, the foundation of financial security is equally important to a fulfilling civilian life.

As Subcommittee Ranking Member and now Vice Ranking Member, I successfully led the opposition to extreme versions of accountability provisions and introduced the Fair VA Accountability Act of 2015 as an alternative to Republican proposals. The opposition to partisan GOP bills laid the groundwork for a compromise that was signed into law last year, which strengthened accountability at the VA while protecting whistleblowers and maintaining due process rights for civil service employees.

As Acting Ranking Member in the 114th Congress, I demonstrated my ability to lead the committee and the caucus by advancing several Democratic priorities, building strong relationships with Veteran Service Organizations, and contributing to significant wins for America's veterans.

I also provided clear messaging guidance and resources to help Members communicate with their constituents and the veteran community. I organized briefings to ensure Democrats were prepared to debate the future of the VA health care system, scheduled meet and greets to connect freshman Democratic members and staff with veterans' groups, and introduced a Democratic omnibus that highlighted our commitment to keeping our promise to those who serve.

As Full Committee Ranking Member, or Chairman I will work with Leadership to craft a cohesive Democratic message and thoughtful legislative strategy for veterans. As Democrats, we must:

- Seek out and address operational deficiencies at the VA;
- Make necessary reforms to the Veterans Health Administration and the benefits it provides, while rejecting conservatives' calls to privatize VA health care;
- Develop a stronger response to the mental health crisis that is affecting veterans across the country; and
- Expand education, job-training, and employment options for veterans, while fighting to end veteran homelessness.

Finally, as the Whip of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and a Co-Chair of the LGBT Equality Caucus, my appointment as Full Committee Ranking Member, or Chairman will continue the Democratic Caucus' commitment to diversity.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you to ensure that we keep our promise to the nation's veterans and provide them with a responsive and effective Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sincerely,



Mark Takano
Vice Ranking Member
House Committee on Veterans Affairs



May 22, 2017

To all Members of the House Democratic Caucus:

On behalf of the over 500,000 supporters of VoteVets, including veterans, military families, and our civilian supporters, we strongly endorse Rep. Mark Takano to be the next Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Rep. Takano would replace Rep. Tim Walz, who VoteVets has worked closely with, for years.

Rep. Walz has been a tireless advocate for veterans. Indeed, his status as a veteran added a much-needed voice, as we fought against efforts to voucherize and privatize the Department of Veterans Affairs, and provide veterans with the quality care that they have earned.

Rep. Takano would follow in that tradition. We feel naming him the new Ranking Member is crucial, as Donald Trump and the Republican establishment focuses its efforts on dismantling the promise of care for veterans, and expanding the permanent use of vouchers. That path leads to privatization of the system, tossing veterans into the for-profit system that is neither dedicated, nor qualified to handle, our unique needs.

Rep. Takano, during his time in Congress, has shown he has what it takes, and the dedication we need, to lead this fight.

This is a very precarious time, and there is no one that VoteVets trusts more to handle leadership in the Committee on Veterans Affairs than Rep. Takano. We strongly urge you to support him for Ranking Member.

Sincerely,

Will Fischer
Director of Government Relations
Iraq War Veteran
VoteVets

The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 ★
(202) 861-2700 ★

September 15, 2017

Honorable Mark Takano
United States House of Representatives
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Takano:

The American Legion is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran service organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. As the largest wartime veteran service organization, The American Legion is dedicated to promoting community, patriotism, national security and serving our nation's servicemembers and veterans.

H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act, or Forever GI bill, was recently signed into law and The American Legion would like to thank you for your tireless work on behalf of student veterans. Since the beginning of your time in the House of Representatives and on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, you have made student veterans your first priority, and we are thankful that your hard work created real policy changes that will impact hundreds of thousands of veterans and their families.

The American Legion would like to thank you specifically for your work to ensure that student veterans and their hard earned GI Bill benefits are protected from fraudulent actors in the education industry. During the 114th Congress, your bill, the Career-Ready Student Veterans Act was signed into law, which prevents veterans from using their GI Bill benefits from enrolling in unaccredited programs that will not lead to employment in specific industries.

We would also like to thank you for your diligent work on restoring GI Bill benefits to victims of the Corinthian Colleges and ITT Technical Institute school closures. Your leadership led to the restoration of GI Bill benefits for 7,200 student veterans and protections for 2,500 students a year in the future. This will make a huge difference in the lives of these veterans who were defrauded by their schools. Without your leadership, these student veterans would have been left unprotected.

Lastly, The American Legion would like to thank you for the other provisions you worked to include in the Forever GI bill. This includes a provision to make permanent the VA's Student Work-Study Allowance program, ensuring that Guardsmen and Reservists can accrue GI bill benefits when ordered to active duty for medical treatment and correcting the formula for calculating student veterans' housing allowance to the benefit of local community colleges.

We at The American Legion look forward to working with you and your office throughout the 115th Congress and beyond. We hope that together we can continue to support and protect student veterans as they earn their degree and transition into the civilian workforce.

Sincerely,
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise H. Rohan".
DENISE H. ROHAN
National Commander



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STRONGER. TOGETHER.

May 26, 2017

House Democratic Caucus
1420 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives,

I am writing you to strongly endorse Rep. Mark Takano of California to be the next Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs. I do so on behalf of more than 100,000 LGBT veterans who have proudly and honorably served our country.

The current Ranking Member, Rep. Walz of Minnesota, has been a reliable leader and unwavering advocate for LGBT veterans, as demonstrated by his introduction the *Protecting the Freedoms and Benefits for All Veterans Act* in 2013 and other actions. With the announcement of his intention to seek the office of Governor of Minnesota, we feel that his successor as the Ranking Member on the Committee needs to be an equally strong leader and advocate for veterans, their families, and those who are LGBT. We believe the best individual for this role is Rep. Mark Takano.

Rep. Takano has built significant experience on the issues and the workings of the committee since arriving in Congress. As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Rep. Takano has preserved and strengthened the GI Bill benefit; bolstered veterans' employment, training, and vocational rehabilitation services; ensured veterans' housing programs are serving their purposes; and improved the transition back to civilian life for our servicemembers. Additionally, he led the floor efforts to defeat the Majority's so-called VA accountability bill. He is a staunch supporter of the Veterans First Act. Moreover, he has outlined an agenda and cohesive message that will help our country address deficiencies at the VA, ensure that necessary reforms take hold at the Veterans Health Administration, work with the VA to put reforms in place that prioritize claims and lower backlogs, and strengthen education and job training that are critical for our veteran population.

Amidst discussions of schemes that would privatize benefits and care for veterans, it is urgent that LGBT veterans and their families have a Ranking Member uniquely sensitive to their needs. While we trust that all democrats are mindful of the party's LGBT constituency, we feel, Rep. Takano is nonetheless the best choice for Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

At a time when the Majority has surrendered governance to alternative facts, who better to lead the opposition on the committee than a man who is unafraid to bring his red pen to legislation riddled with errors and omissions?

We reiterate our unequivocal support for Rep. Mark Takano as Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, and we urge you to support him as well.

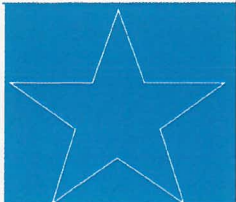
Thank you,

Matthew F. Thorn
Executive Director, OutServe-SLDN

OutServe-SLDN.org

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 @OutServeSLDN





VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS

May 31, 2017

The Honorable Mark Takano
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0541

Dear Congressman Takano:

As President of Veterans Education Success (VES), a non-profit organization that works to protect the integrity and promise of the GI Bill, I wanted to thank you personally for your tireless work on behalf of our nation's veterans.

Your skillful ability to work across the aisle on issues important to veteran students resulted in unanimous approval in the House Veterans Affairs Committee of the Career Ready Student Veterans Act, which became law in December 2016. This important piece of legislation ensures that veterans will no longer waste their hard-earned GI Bill benefits on worthless programs that lack the programmatic accreditation needed to obtain state-licensure or certification, which is a prerequisite to obtaining a job in many occupations.

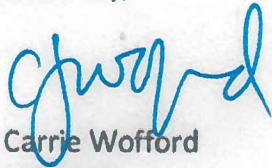
This year, you reintroduced much needed legislation that you sponsored in the 114th Congress. The Veterans Education Relief and Restoration Act (VERRA) would ensure that veterans attending schools that close suddenly, such as Corinthian (which closed in 2015) and ITT Tech (which closed in 2016), can have some of their GI Bill benefits restored and can continue to receive transitional housing benefits until they are able to select and enroll in a degree program at a new institution. Under current law, housing benefits are terminated immediately, putting veterans and their families at risk of homelessness. We look forward to working with you to help ensure that veterans can have their hard-earned benefits restored when a school closes.

Finally, we commend you for the GI Bill Oversight Act, legislation you introduced in the 114th Congress to give the Department of Veterans Affairs new tools to enforce existing statutory and regulatory requirements that prohibit the use of misleading and deceptive advertising to recruit veterans. VA must take seriously its statutory obligation to protect veterans from deceptive recruiting and protect taxpayers' investment from waste, fraud, and abuse.

We also have been impressed with your willingness to meet with student veterans and with your sophisticated fluency in leading nuanced discussions of policy issues.

Again, we thank you for your effective leadership on behalf of the nation's student veterans. You are a true leader for veterans and we look forward to a continuing strong relationship with you and your capable staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Wofford', with a stylized, flowing script.

Carrie Wofford
President



May 5th, 2017

The Honorable Mark Takano
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0541

Mr. Takano:

As the President & CEO of Student Veterans of America (SVA), and on behalf of nearly 1,400 chapters located at colleges and universities nationwide, I wanted to take a moment to share our appreciation for your hard work. With the 115th Congress well underway, we at SVA periodically take an opportunity to thank specific Members of Congress for their efforts on behalf of student veterans.

In particular, we wanted to show you our gratitude for your continuous effort advocating for programs such as the Student Veterans with Families Act, the Career-Ready Student Veterans Act, and support for student veterans affected by ITT Tech. Furthermore, we also thank you for your diligent work on protecting student veterans that will be affected by the ACICS de-recognition. Without your assistance over 30,000 student veterans would have been left unprotected.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with you and your office through the rest of this congress. It is our hope that together we can strengthen the Post 9/11 GI Bill, and support student veterans as they earn their degree and transition into the civilian workforce.

Thank you for standing with student veterans and for providing impressive leadership as we continue to address these critical issues. Please feel free to contact me directly if you should have any additional questions on this matter by phone at 202-223-4710, or by email at jared.lyon@studentveterans.org.

Sincerely,

Jared Lyon
President & CEO
Student Veterans of America



A project of



May 25, 2017

The Honorable Mark Takano
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Takano:

I write on behalf of Veterans for American Ideals, a nonpartisan group of veterans who believe America is its strongest when its policies and actions match its ideals. As veterans, we sincerely appreciate all of your work to support and increase opportunities for veterans. As a group that also believes that service doesn't end when the uniform comes off, and that cares greatly about protecting all Americans and the ideals we swore to uphold, we also appreciate your principled service to our national values.

At Vets for American Ideals, we believe that keeping our promise to our wartime allies who served alongside us in Iraq and Afghanistan through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program is not only essential to safeguarding the lives of troops deployed on current and future missions, it is essential to preserving our national character. We believe that American leadership in the world is not a given, but is continually earned, and requires that we protect the most vulnerable, including refugees. We believe that anti-Muslim bigotry has no place in our society, and weakens our national security.

On each of these issues, and on others that intersect with our values, you have been a leading voice. In a speech on the House floor against the early 2016 executive order restricting immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, you said, "History often forces us to ask ourselves, 'how would we have acted if we lived in that moment?'"

We applaud your actions, and the passionate and outspoken leadership you've provided on these issues. Thank you for standing with veterans, and for your outstanding leadership to uphold the ideals that truly make our country great.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott A. Cooper".

Lt. Col. Scott Cooper, USMC (Ret.)
Founder, Veterans for American Ideals
Director of National Security Outreach, Human Rights First



THE AMERICAN MILITARY PARTNER ASSOCIATION

*** WWW.MILITARYPARTNERS.ORG ***

June 15, 2017

The Honorable Mark Takano
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0541

Dear Representative Takano,

On behalf of the tens of thousands of military spouses supporting our nation's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) service members and veterans, I want to thank you for your tremendous leadership working tirelessly to ensure all of our nation's veterans and their families receive the support and resources they've earned serving our nation.

Your consistent and committed advocacy for our military and veteran families has not gone unnoticed. From your leadership on veterans' educational benefits to strengthening employment and training programs, your ability to find common ground with those on the other side of the aisle has led to important reform and progress in the work to support our veterans and their families.

We are incredibly grateful for your leadership and continued support for all who serve and have served.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley Broadway-Mack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ashley Broadway-Mack
President

The American Military Partner Association
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