

BETTY McCOLLUM  
4TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

1714 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-6631  
FAX: (202) 225-1968

165 WESTERN AVENUE NORTH  
SUITE 17  
ST. PAUL, MN 55102  
(651) 224-9191  
FAX: (651) 224-3056

[www.house.gov/mccollum](http://www.house.gov/mccollum)



UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE BRANCH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE DEPARTMENT  
AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET  
SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP  
CONGRESSIONAL GLOBAL  
HEALTH CAUCUS, CO-FOUNDER

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betty McCollum".

**Congresswoman Betty McCollum  
Statement for the Record  
Special Order in Memory of Congressman John Murtha  
February 23, 2010**

**Ms. McCollum:** Madam Speaker, I and the following members rise in recognition of the late U.S. Representative John Murtha's lifelong dedication to members of our armed services: Representative Bruce Braley, Representative Tim Walz, Representative Keith Ellison, Representative James Oberstar, Representative Leonard Boswell, Representative David Loebsack, Representative Collin Peterson, and Representative Tom Latham.

Chairman John Murtha was a passionate legislator and decorated ex-Marine who never stopped fighting for our men and women in uniform. In 1974, Murtha, then an officer in the Marine Reserves, became the first Vietnam War combat veteran elected to the House of Representatives. As Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, Congressman Murtha was a tireless advocate for our troops, military families, and our veterans on Capitol Hill. At a time when we are mourning his passing, it is important to recognize Chairman Murtha's work to ensure that veterans receive support. The undersigned members would like to call attention to the work he did to secure the benefits promised and earned by 22,000 National Guard and Reserve personnel in our states.

In January of 2007, the Department of Defense authorized Post-Deployment Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program, which provides additional pay when a soldier deploys more frequently than DOD policy requires. For the two years since the authorization of PDMRA, the Pentagon's implementation of the program has been slow and incomplete. As result, thousands of National Guard and Reserve members who have served multiple and extended tours in Iraq and Afghanistan did not receive the pay to which they are entitled. This problem has affected National Guard and Reserve personnel in every state across the nation. Members organized to bring attention to this problem and to find a resolution. The undersigned members have sent letters to the Pentagon, organized events, and met with armed services personnel for years and asked for the Chairman's assistance and leadership.

Chairman Murtha heard our request and took action. He made phone calls directly to Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Army Secretary Pete Geren. He included language to remedy the delay in the FY10 Defense Appropriations bill, and in numerous letters to the Department of Defense since 2007 Congressman Murtha supported his colleagues in making it clear that further delay in resolving this issue was unacceptable to our members of the armed services. Because of the Chairman Murtha's support, the Department of Defense issued Army policy guidance for

cash reimbursements for PDMRA for Reserve and National Guard personnel, which represents a crucial step in finally resolving this issue.

The late Congressman John Murtha has shown throughout his time in the military and in Congress that he is a dedicated leader on fighting on behalf of military families. In honor of his lifelong commitment, I and other members of Congress would like to submit this statement for the Congressional Record.

Colli C. Palm

W. J. Walsh

Bruce Bradley

Samuel B. Bunn

Jim Oberstar

Keith Elkin

Tom Latham

Dave Lachack

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_