



Minnesota's 4th District E-Report!

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



NOVEMBER 25, 2003

Hot News!

McCollum Pushes to Adequately Equip Troops

In the wake of equipment shortages among National Guard and Reserve units in Iraq and increasing fatalities there, Rep. Betty McCollum joined 49 members of the House of Representatives in introducing the Guard and Reserves Protection Act. The measure urges Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to address the shortfalls in items including bullet-proof vests and armored vehicles.

Over 60 National Guard and Reserve members have died and dozens more have been seriously injured in the war in Iraq.

"National Guard and Reservists are first-class soldiers fighting on the front lines, and they deserve better than second-class equipment," said McCollum. "Concerned families of Guardsmen and women should not have to contact their local Member of Congress seeking basic supplies."

Numerous Guard and Reserve units are being sent to Iraq without crucial items such as guns, kevlar vests and reinforced Humvees. Many of the Humvees being used by Guard and Reserve units have not been strengthened to protect against enemy fire or roadside bombs, and reports indicate that 40,000 troops in the battle zone – many of them in Guard and Reserve combat support units – lack bulletproof vests. As a matter of policy, National Guard and Reserve troops have been given second-hand equipment no longer used by the active duty military.

Over 28,000 National Guard and Reserve personnel are currently serving alongside active duty military in Iraq, making up more than a quarter of the American troops there. Just yesterday, an additional 15,000 Guard and Reserve troops were ordered to prepare for a possible yearlong tour of duty in Iraq or Kuwait, bringing the total number of Guard and Reserve troops who have been alerted for possible service in the Persian Gulf region early next year to 58,000.



Representative Betty McCollum joined Representatives Katie Sieben (DFL-Newport), Charlotte Samuelson (R-New Brighton) and Senator Yvonne Prettner Solon (DFL-Duluth) at a reception for the National Forum for Newly Elected Women State Legislators. The forum brings together newly elected women legislators from across the country for a four-day conference about the legislative process and policies. In addition, the event provided an opportunity for the legislators to build connections with colleagues from other states.

The Week Ahead

The U.S. House of Representatives is in recess until Monday **December 8, 2003** - at which point they will consider the Omnibus Appropriations bill. Upon completion of legislative business on December 8, the House is expected to convene next year on **January 20, 2003** for the start of the 2nd session of the 108th Congress.

Wishing you and your family a safe and Happy Thanksgiving

Contact Congresswoman Betty McCollum . . . www.house.gov/mccollum/contact.html

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