



Minnesota's 4th District E-Report!

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



APRIL 18, 2003

Hot News!

McCollum Fights GOP Cuts to Veterans

After heated negotiations, the US House of Representatives passed a 2004 budget resolution last week, by a vote of 216-211. To make room for the bloated ten year \$1.2 trillion tax cut plan supported by President Bush, the Republican plan makes deep cuts in domestic priorities including, veterans' benefits.

This budget resolution passed by Congress cuts veterans' benefits and health care by almost \$6.2 billion over 10 years. Never mind the \$128 billion in *unidentified* domestic spending cuts over ten years, which could mean more cuts to veterans' programs.

"In the weeks and months ahead, we will welcome home our soldiers currently serving in the Middle East. Our men and women in uniform deserve the respect of receiving the same quality of benefits as those who have served before them. If anything, we should consider additional investments for our new generation of veterans and their health care needs," McCollum said.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) predicts veterans programs will cost \$316.7 billion over a 10-year period. This estimation is based on current year levels, and does not account for any increases in veterans' services or the addition of new veterans such as those currently serving in Iraq or in the war on terrorism.

"Veterans represent a cross-section of our communities that have made great sacrifices for our country. These budget cuts are disrespectful, degrading and fail to meet the needs of veterans and their families," McCollum said of the Republican budget cuts to veterans' benefits and health care.

Budget cuts will affect the health care, the Montgomery GI Bill education benefits, vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs for service-disabled veterans.



Students from the University of St. Thomas traveled to Washington to visit with Rep. Betty McCollum to discuss the School of Americas and the United State's involvement in Iraq.

Congress Passes Budget Supplemental

After serious negotiations in the Appropriations conference committee, the Emergency Wartime Supplemental bill (HR 1559) finally passed in the US House of Representatives by a voice vote, Saturday April 12, 2003.

HR 1559 is a \$78.5 billion spending package intended to pay for the cost of war with Iraq.

In addition to money to pay for the war, however, the new law provides \$3.9 billion for the Department of Homeland Security, \$2.4 billion grants to struggling domestic airlines, a 26-week extension of unemployment benefits for aviation workers and \$369 million for international food aid programs. \$59.5 billion has been allotted for the war with Iraq.

President Bush signed this spending bill into law on April 15, 2003.

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