

*NEWS FROM...*

CHAIRMAN BOB FILNER

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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Contact Kristal DeKleer at (202) 225-9756

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## **House Passes Bills Package to Eliminate Homelessness, Provide Job Opportunities and Protect Home Ownership for Veterans**

**Washington, D.C.** – House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) announced that the U.S. House of Representatives voted to approve seven measures this week that would improve benefits and services to veterans provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

### **H.R. 4810 - End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010 (Filner)**

This bill increases funding to successful programs for homeless veterans, requires each VA medical center that provides supporting housing services to provide housing counselors, requires housing counselors to conduct landlord research, strengthens permanent housing programs, and pays special interest to the needs of homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children. This bill includes provisions from H.R. 2504 (Teague); H.R. 2559, as amended (Hare); H.R. 2735, as amended (Rodriguez); and H.R. 3906 (Teague).

*"Today, the House seized the opportunity to take bold action to combat veteran homelessness by passing H.R. 4810," said Chairman Filner. "Fortunately, Congress has a willing partner in the Obama Administration, which has committed the resources and necessary support to achieve the goal of ending veteran homelessness in 5 years. It is unacceptable that even one of our veterans sleep on the streets or in shelters after risking their lives on behalf of this country and I am proud the House of Representatives took this vote to fight for each and every veteran."*

### **H.R. 1879 - National Guard Employment Protection Act of 2009 (Coffman)**

One of the protections provided by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA, is to require employers to support a service member's absence for up to five years if called to active military duty. Since September 11, 2001, the National Guard has played a critical role in federal missions, and a small but increasing number of National Guard members are bumping against the five-year USERRA protection for their civilian jobs. This bill provides necessary reemployment rights for certain individuals ordered to full-time National Guard duty.

### **H.J.Res. 80 - Honoring the Blinded Veterans Association on its 65th anniversary (Halvorson)**

House Joint Resolution 80 recognizes the fundamental role that the Blinded Veterans Association has played in ensuring that visually impaired veterans receive the recognition, care, and benefits they deserve. The measure recognizes this organization that has done much to make Congress and the American people aware of the challenges facing those who have become visually impaired through military service to our nation.

### **H.R. 3976 - Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act of 2009 (Perriello)**

During the peak of the home foreclosure crisis in 2008, Congress passed the HEART Act, a comprehensive housing and economic recovery bill. Among the critical protections included in the legislation was a provision to prohibit foreclosure of property owned by a service member for nine months following a period of military service. This bill extends expiring protections that safeguard veteran homeowners from foreclosure for nine months following deployment.

### **H.R. 4667 - Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010 (Perriello)**

This bill increases the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes. The bill would go into effect December 1, 2010.

### **H.R. 4592 – Energy Jobs for Veterans Act (Teague)**

This bill increases job opportunities for veterans by reimbursing energy employers for the cost of providing on-the-job training for veterans in the energy sector. Specifically, the bill creates the pilot "Veterans Energy Related Employment Program" which would award competitive grants to three states that are able to serve a population of eligible veterans, boast a diverse energy industry, and have the ability to carry out such a training program.

**H.R. 4360 – Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D.**  
**Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation**  
**Center (Campbell)**

This bill designates the Department of Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, as the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center."

*"Over the last three years, Democrats increased the VA health care budget by 55%, instituted advance funding, provided a G.I. Bill for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, revamped the VA home loan program, and expanded access to VA health care for more veterans," said Chairman Filner. "During these tough economic times, we must do more. Today, the House committed to ending veteran homelessness, worked to provide employment protections and opportunities, and passed a bill to support veterans during reintegration by protecting homeownership following deployment. Congress continues to take bold action to support veterans."*

The bills will next be heard in the U.S. Senate