



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

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BISHOP MEETS WITH LOCAL VETERAN LEADERS

Discusses Funding for Programs in Meeting at American Legion

Patchogue— With hundreds of thousands of future war veterans currently fighting in Iraq, Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) held a town hall meeting on Friday, April 4 to discuss the current state of veterans affairs on Capitol Hill. Veteran leaders from throughout the 1st Congressional District joined Bishop at the Patchogue American Legion.

Bishop listened to the veterans' views on how we can improve veterans' services, specifically, what can we do to help the troops who will hopefully soon be coming home from the Middle East.

"Now more than ever, it is vital that we stand up for our veterans and give you the support you need," Bishop said. "I am very proud to support our veterans. And I believe that in both war and peace, we must show veterans the utmost respect.

Bishop discussed a vote to cut funding for veterans' programs by \$14 billion in the House Budget Resolution, which passed on March 21 by a 215-212 margin. Under pressure from pro-veteran Representatives and veterans' groups including the American Legion, VFW and Disabled American Veterans, the House voted to reverse the cuts on April 1. However, Bishop believes that the status quo is not enough, and that we need to improve veterans programs.

"Veterans programs need more funding, not less," Bishop said. "There is currently a 300,000 national waiting list for health services and waits of six months or more to get an appointment are not uncommon. That is unacceptable, and it is an issue I will work hard to address."

Bishop also discussed several bills he has co-sponsored:

HR 303—The Retired Pay Restoration Act: Permits retired members of the armed forces with service-connected disabilities to be paid both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation. Under current law, military retirees who have been injured and receive VA disability are not allowed to receive their full retirement. Bishop believes it is unfair for military retirees to be they only retirees who are cheated out of funds they have earned.

HR 58—Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act: Allows military retirees under age 65, their unmarried surviving spouses and their dependents to receive coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan as a supplement to Medicare.

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