



Congressman Tim Bishop

FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK

NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACT: JON SCHNEIDER
PHONE: (631) 696-6500**

BISHOP AND LOCAL DISABLED IRAQ WAR VETERAN MARK 4TH YEAR OF WAR WITH A CALL FOR BETTER CARE

*Congressman is co-sponsor of new legislation to improve care for wounded
soldiers*

LAKE RONKONKOMA, NY—On the fourth anniversary of the War in Iraq, Congressman Tim Bishop and a local Iraq War veteran, whose initial rejection for service-related benefits forced him to leave Long Island for financial reasons, called for improved care for veterans. Bishop, U.S. Army veteran Joshua Ports of Ronkonkoma, and his wife, Christine, were joined by approximately 20 veterans at the William Merritt Hallock American Legion Post to call for better care for our wounded veterans.

"Josh Ports fought a war for our country; he and his fellow veterans should not have to fight a second war at home to receive the benefits they have earned," Bishop said. "While I am honored to be able to assist, it should not take congressional intervention to help a wounded veteran. As we begin our fifth year in Iraq, it is vital for the Administration to realize that supporting our troops must extend beyond the battlefield to the home front."

Ports was discharged in June, 2005, and later filed a disability claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) since he was unable to work. Yet almost one year later, Ports still had not received a response from the VA. Consequently, Ports and his wife were forced to leave Long Island as they could not afford the region's high rent, utilities, and other cost-of-living expenses.

Congressman Bishop intervened on Ports' behalf by calling on the VA to acknowledge Ports' disability claim and to expedite its approval. As a result, Ports recently received a 60 % service-connected VA disability rating and approximately \$17,000 in retroactive VA compensation, which enabled his family to move back to Long Island.

"I appreciate the help I received from Congressman Bishop and his staff," Ports said. "They were there when I needed help, and thanks to them my family was able to come back to Long Island."

As part of an effort to do more for wounded troops, Congressman Bishop is co-sponsoring the Dignity for Wounded Warriors Act of 2007 to improve medical facilities, procedures and services related to outpatient care for wounded and recovering service members at active military hospitals. Bishop said this legislation is particularly important with nearly 10,000 New Yorkers, including many Long Islanders, currently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This legislation would ensure that our troops receive proper care in return for their service and

sacrifice,” Bishop said.

In addition, the bill would direct the Department of Defense to reduce the burdens of the current system on recovering service members and families. Specifically, the legislation would require improvements to facilities and increased inspections; will reduce paperwork and red tape; and would provide improved counseling for service members and their families.

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A photo of the event is available at <http://wwwc.house.gov/timbishop/03-19-07%20PortsEvent.JPG>. For status and text of the Wounded Warriors Act, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.1268>.

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