



United States Senator
Richard Shelby
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



Remembering Our Veterans

By: Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL)

More than 40 years ago, President John F. Kennedy cautioned the graduating class at West Point to expect ingratitude in times of peace. Quoting a poem found in an old sentry box in Gibraltar, he said: "God and the soldier all men adore, In times of trouble – and no more, For when war is over, and all things righted, God is neglected – and the soldier slighted." No matter the time, in war or in peace, I believe we should always take a moment to honor our veterans. For it is their sacrifices that allow us to enjoy the freedoms we hold dear.

Today, the United States finds itself at war and on this Veterans' Day our nation will pause to honor the men and women, nearly 25 million throughout US history, who took up arms in defense of our nation. Veterans' Day is for those who have served admirably and fought bravely on behalf of freedom and justice throughout the world. Each year we set aside this day of remembrance to honor our war dead, recognize our war heroes, and express our gratitude for the courageous

and selfless service of each and every veteran.

As we take this day to pay tribute to our servicemembers with parades and memorial services, it is important that we honor our veterans in other ways as well. Congress must strive to preserve, protect, and maintain the benefits our veterans have so rightly earned. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I am focused on the many pressing issues affecting our veterans. This year, the Senate approved \$70.7 billion dollars for the Veterans' Administration (VA), overturned a proposal for new enrollment fees in TRICARE and additional copayments for prescription medications, increased the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance coverage for Active Duty personnel to \$400,000, and provided \$1.5 billion in emergency spending to fill a shortfall in the VA's 2005 budget. While these issues have always been important, they are particularly imperative today as American servicemembers risk their lives each day around the globe. I believe that we should use this time of renewed appreciation

for our armed forces to ensure that they have a more secure future. The last thing our men and women in combat should have to worry about is whether the nation will provide them the benefits they have earned when they return home.

Finally, it is particularly important to express our gratitude to the servicemembers who are putting their lives on the line each day. Our thoughts are with them as they stand ready to defend liberty and fight aggression. In commemoration of their efforts, we must pause to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. We remember in sadness those who did not return to their loved ones from their service in war-torn parts of the world where they went in defense of liberty. Our thoughts and prayers are with their family and friends.

We must never forget that freedom has a very high price – a price that has been paid by our nation's veterans and their families. Today, on Veterans' Day, we pause to say thank you.

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: NOVEMBER 8, 2005



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