

## Our veterans deserve more

(First published in the Charlotte Sun, November 10, 2007)

Over the past year, I have had the honor of meeting with some of our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. These young men and women are true heroes whose personal sacrifices for America should remind all of us that we owe a debt of gratitude to those who serve our country in the armed forces. Their patriotism should be honored not only this Veterans Day but through our demonstrated support throughout the year.

In an effort to preserve our veterans' stories for generations to come, my office is bringing together veterans with local high school students to participate in the Veterans' History Project, which is run by the Library of Congress. This project is an effort to collect and preserve wartime stories from American servicemen and women. Over the next eight months, students will conduct and record interviews with veterans who served from World War II to the present. These interviews will then be preserved in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. for generations to come.

In Congress, I have helped pass meaningful legislation to provide our veterans with the care they need and ease the burden on military families. This year, I was proud to support legislation to increase funding for veterans by more than \$8 billion, the largest veterans' funding increase in history; strengthen the military health system; add 1,800 new claims processors to reduce the backlog of veterans awaiting access to their earned benefits; give a pay raise to our troops above the president's request; and make much needed tax relief permanent for our military families.

On this Veterans Day, let us honor those who have defended our freedom and give thanks for their service, sacrifice and patriotism. America is forever grateful for what you have done.

Tim Mahoney

Rep. Tim Mahoney represents Florida's 16th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives.