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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - National Military Month

MAY 19TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - National Military Month

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

8th Congressional District - Missouri - May marks National Military Appreciation Month when events are organized to honor our brave men and women in uniform and the sacrifices they make defending our freedoms at home and abroad. Across our country, civic groups and average American citizens are joining together to host everything from appreciation dinners to parades and even a fishing tournament to let our military members know we honor their service. In the House of Representatives, I am working to ensure our federal government keeps its promises to members of the military.

Caring for our veterans should be a top priority in Washington. The Veterans Administration (VA) has thousands of doctors, nurses and public servants who work hard to give military members the best healthcare we can offer. But, too often, the VA system fails those it was created to help. An outrageous backlog at the VA has caused veterans to wait months for answers on disability claims. Unfortunately, the same is true of VA medical services where wait lists for some critical services are extremely long. In some tragic instances, veterans have passed away waiting for healthcare services from the VA. This is unacceptable.

This month, the House of Representatives took action to provide critical funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition to funding, the House has acted to make systemic changes in the VA to improve access to healthcare services for our veterans. The legislation provides specific funding for medical care, mental health services, traumatic brain injury treatment for our most seriously wounded American heroes, homeless services and job training to ensure that the transition back to civilian life is successful for our veterans. Additionally, the House is working to modernize the VA with a new electronic health record system and an updated paperless claims processing system. These updates are the first step toward ending the unacceptable backlog of VA disability and medical claims.

Another way that Congress can improve access to care for our veterans is through the Patient-Centered Community Care program that allows the VA to contract with local healthcare providers. In our Eighth Congressional District there are veterans who are forced to travel one hundred miles to the closest VA clinic or hospital. Many veterans have injuries or are elderly. Extended travel often times only adds to veterans' frustrations. The Patient-Centered Community Care program is relatively new and not yet widely available. I am working to grow the program and make healthcare options more accessible for our veterans.

Like other Americans, the House of Representatives is committed to honoring members of the military during Military Appreciation Month. While people across the country are holding special events for our service members, I have been working in the House of Representatives to keep the promises made to our veterans and honor their service to our nation. We must always honor the service and sacrifices of our military members.

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Kent Hampton's Capitol Report May 21, 2014

MAY 19TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Kent Hampton's Capitol Report May 21, 2014

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Jefferson City, Missouri - The budget has been truly agreed and finally passed: the largest in the state's history of 26.4 billion.

We believe we helped make a difference in many departments across the state, especially Education. The House resumed moving forward on bills with great interest.

The Agriculture omnibus bill was passed by the House and Senate. The parts of the bill receiving the most attention were covering a program to assist the daily operation in remaining prominent in Missouri agriculture.

Our dairy farmers have been leaving the industry because of low pricing they received for their milk and the high cost of feed brought about by drought conditions where our herds are located. With the loss of our dairy farmers the state of Missouri is now having to import 60% of our milk to meet the need.

The other topic that brought the most interest pertained to captive cervids (white tail deer). These animals were classified as livestock and placed under the

boundaries of the the Department of Agriculture. Meetings held with both the Department of Conservation and the Department of Agriculture developed in the new Administration Assignment. Here in the last hours of session, as I write this Capitol Report, we are still working with the Senate through conference committees dealing with issues of importance.

Heading the list would be the school transfer bill pertaining to the unaccredited school districts in St. Louis and Kansas City. A tremendous amount of time and input from not only the committees, but other members of the chambers, as well as interest groups associated with education have been working tirelessly on this issue to help ensure these children have the opportunity at a quality education and move forward with their lives.

As another session draws to a close, I want to personally thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you. We, Shana (the Jr. Representative for District 150) and myself have learned much more about this great state. We have established relationships with state leaders and department heads, and have worked through many constituent issues. Having school groups and folks from home at the Capitol is always a bonus. Our beliefs and positions for District 150 have not and will not be compromised. It truly is an honor and one I will continue to do the best of my ability to serve.

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Treating Behavioral Health Like Physical Health

MAY 13TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Treating Behavioral Health Like Physical Health

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Jefferson City, Missouri - As families in Missouri and nationwide mark National Mental Health Awareness Month in May, approximately one in four adults suffers from a diagnosable mental illness nationwide, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Unfortunately, many don't receive the care they need.

We were reminded of this important challenge last month during the devastating events at [Fort Hood](#), Texas. As Commanding General Mark Milley [noted in the aftermath of this tragedy](#), the suspect reportedly sought help for mental illness, and he had a medical history indicating an “unstable psychiatric or psychological condition” that investigators believe to be a “fundamental underlying factor” in this catastrophe. Army Secretary John McHugh also told Congress the suspect was undergoing treatment for depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances.

There's no doubt that our military bases on American soil should be the safest place possible for our servicemen and women and for their loved ones. Fort Hood was a terrible loss for all Americans, especially for those who are willing to serve and for their families. In the weeks following, I visited General Leonard Wood Army Hospital (GLWACH) to learn more about the military's mental health services, and I continue to talk to [military leaders in Missouri](#) and in [Washington](#) as part of my role on the Senate's defense authorizing and appropriations committees. My goal is to work with our nation's military leaders to guarantee our servicemen and women, veterans, and military families have access to quality behavioral health treatment – before a mental health crisis takes a terrible turn for the worst.

As part of those efforts, I recently introduced the bipartisan “[Caring For America's Heroes Act](#)” to bring treatment for mental illness in-line with the way physical illnesses are treated for military retirees and their families under TRICARE. I also joined my colleague Senator Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) to successfully pass a version of the “[Excellence in Mental Health Act](#)” last month to help address the nation's fragmented mental health system. This provision establishes two-year pilot programs in eight states to expand access to community mental health services. The original legislation garnered broad support, with 25 Senators co-sponsoring and endorsements from more than 50 mental health, veteran, and law enforcement groups.

Mental illness is just that: an illness. As we recognize National Mental Health Awareness Month, I hope my colleagues will join me in working to improve our nation's policies. We must start treating behavioral health like physical health if we're going to expand access and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

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Nixon Releases Statement - Former Gov. Teasdale Passes

MAY 08TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Nixon Releases Statement - Former Gov. Teasdale Passes

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - Governor Jay Nixon today released the following statement upon the death of former Missouri Gov. Joseph P. Teasdale. The Governor also has ordered flags at all Missouri state facilities to be flown at half-staff until the date of interment for Gov. Teasdale.

Earlier this evening we received the sad news about the passing of a dedicated public servant, former Governor Joseph P. Teasdale. Gov. Teasdale was a good man whose life was guided by a deep and abiding faith and a commitment to public service.

By the time he was elected as Governor in 1976 at the age of 40, Gov. Teasdale already had a record of accomplishment. As an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Kansas City, he headed up the organized crime section; then at the age of 30, he became the youngest prosecuting attorney in the history of Jackson County.

The hallmark of his 1976 campaign was his walking across the state to personally visit with Missourians, and the pages of Missouri’s political history were made richer with the image of “Walkin’ Joe.”

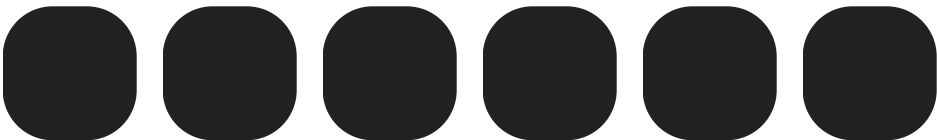
During his tenure as Governor, Gov. Teasdale was especially known for his actions in support of Missouri seniors. He created the Division of Aging, he pushed for passage of the Nursing Home Reform Act, and he supported removal of the state sales tax on prescription drugs.

Georganne and I are keeping the Teasdale family in our thoughts and prayers.

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Veterans of Operation Iraqi/Enduring Freedom Day

MARCH 28TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Veterans of Operation Iraqi/Enduring Freedom Day

*Submitted by
Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Editor*

Missouri - Gov. Jay Nixon encouraged Missourians to observe Veterans of Operation Iraqi/Enduring Freedom Day on March 26 in honor of the nation's military veterans who served in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2012, the Governor signed into law a bill designating March 26 as the date in Missouri to give special honor and recognition to those veterans who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Desert Storm.

“In every town across Missouri, you’ll find veterans who served during one of these conflicts in the Middle East,” Gov. Nixon said. “You’ll also find thousands of Missouri families who still have a loved one in uniform in Afghanistan or another country where our military serves. We have a responsibility to honor and respect their sacrifice, and I encourage Missourians to join me in thanking these veterans and their families for what they have done for our country and our state.”

As a member of the Council of Governors, Gov. Nixon has traveled twice to Iraq and three times to Kuwait and Afghanistan since 2009 (most recently in December 2012) to meet with U.S. military and civilian leaders in those countries and to visit with Missourians serving in the Missouri National Guard or the regular armed forces.

In January 2010, Gov. Nixon also launched the Show-Me Heroes initiative, which works with Missouri employers to give first consideration to military veterans when job openings occur. In the past four years, more than 3,500 Missouri employers have taken the Show-Me Heroes pledge, and more than 6,300 veterans have been hired by those businesses since those employers joined the program.

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