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# Honoring Our Heroes on Memorial Day - Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report

MAY 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Honoring Our Heroes on Memorial Day - Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report

## Honoring Our Heroes on Memorial Day

As citizens of the greatest nation in the world, it is important that we take time to reflect on what is really important to us. We look at the abundance of blessings we have been given - from the many freedoms we have to the limitless opportunities we have to pursue our dreams to the comfort and security we have in knowing we live in a land where we can raise our children in peace and safety - and it is obvious that we have so much for which we must be thankful. It is just as obvious that we have the responsibility to make absolutely certain that we do not allow these blessings to be taken for granted.

That's easier said than done given how hectic our lives so often are. It's all too easy for even the most important things to get lost in the shuffle that results from trying to work, raise a family, and just live our day-to-day lives. But a day like Memorial Day serves to remind us that we must not only count our blessings, but also pause to remember and honor all those who have fought and died to give them to us.

The men and women who chose to serve in defense of the United States of America did not do so in order to become heroes, but without question their deeds and actions were heroic and have earned them the title of hero. It also goes without saying that these selfless soldiers did not enter their service with the goal of seeing their lives ended too soon and their names engraved in stone. However, that is what happened, and it is

because of these sacrifices that we come together to pay tribute to the few who did what so many would not and could not.

As one of our greatest Missourians, President Harry Truman, once said, “Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices.” My hope is that his words will always have the ring of truth, and it is our duty to ensure they do.

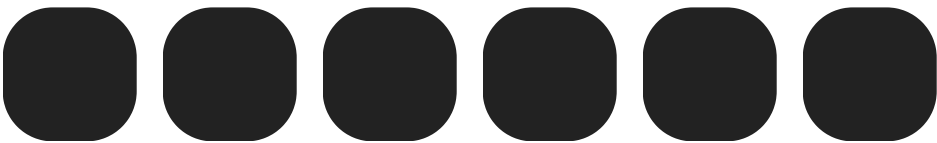
We must never forget, and we must never cease to be thankful for the heroes our nation has been blessed to have. Some who gave their lives now have their names etched in the walls of memorials, while others live on in the hearts and minds of those who love them. But for the other heroes who have not been remembered in this way, they have their own lasting monument that should forever serve as a reminder of their service. This monument is the country we all are so proud to call home. It is a monument created by the sacrifices of these heroic individuals, and it is a monument that shines as a beacon of freedom and hope not just for us, but for people from all around the world.

On Memorial Day, and on every day going forward, I ask us to remember that. I ask us to give thanks that our nation has been blessed with such heroes. To all those who have served, and to all those who have given their lives in service, we say thank you! May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America!

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# Remembering the Price of Freedom - Jason Smith's Capitol Report

MAY 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Remembering the Price of Freedom - Jason Smith's Capitol Report

### **Remembering the Price of Freedom**

**May 27, 2016**

Memorial Day is the unofficial start to summer. The temperatures are rising, school is winding down for many and the smell of backyard barbecues as the sun goes down is starting to fill the air. Memorial Day is also one of my favorite times to drive around our district and see so many American flags placed on houses, businesses, and in yards. In a united display of patriotism it is a symbol of how much we love our country. Many of us look at this long weekend as a chance to slow down, get together with family and friends, and sit outside to enjoy what we hope is beautiful Missouri weather. However, it is also important we honor and remember the real purpose for this holiday and pay tribute to the men and women who paid the ultimate price fighting for the freedoms and way of life we often take for granted.

We were reminded of this sacrifice recently when World War II soldier Herbert John Hoard of DeSoto, Missouri was finally given a proper burial some 74 years after he lost his life during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Mr. Hoard's was a moving story of a young man, a member of our greatest generation, who answered the call to serve his country, but never returned home.

Like Mr. Hoard, our community is home to more than 60,000 veterans and assisting those veterans navigate an often times confusing and unresponsive VA network accounts for roughly half of all the casework assistance my office provides each year. This year, we also held the first ever Veterans Summits here in southeast and south central Missouri which provided an opportunity for our veteran neighbors to come and receive information on the services available to them from multiple departments and agencies all in one place. This event was so rewarding because it allowed me to talk with veterans and hear first-

hand the issues they are facing and learn how our office can better serve them. I am proud and humbled that this year alone my office helped a veteran in Perryville receive over \$100,000 in owed back pay and that we were able to honor another southeast Missourian veteran with multiple commendation medals he rightfully earned.

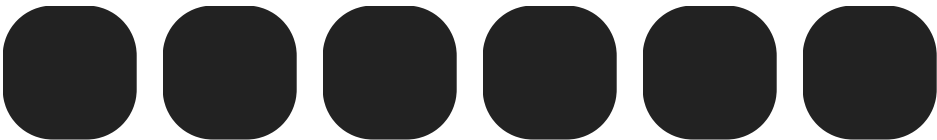
Of course all of this also comes at a time when the VA Secretary compared wait times at VA hospitals to wait times for rides at Disney theme parks. While his comments were shameful and disrespectful, it also highlighted the frustration so many of us have in a system that is simply not doing everything it can for those who gave us everything in return. Hopefully very soon we will see better performance to address management problems and health care shortages, and to increase the speed, efficiency and effectiveness as well as utilize technology to better serve our veterans.

You can continue to count on me to support our nation’s heroes not only heading into Memorial Day weekend, but every day looking forward because the fabric of our country and constitution is defended by the heroes in our hometowns. I am proud of our community for recognizing these heroes and openly displaying our patriotism, especially when freedom is threatened throughout the world every day. May God bless you and your families this Memorial Day weekend.

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# Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, May 20, 2016

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MAY 20TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, May 20, 2016

## **Heroes Dressed in Blue May 20, 2016**

This week thousands of law enforcement officers from around the country came to Washington, DC to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. As part of the memorial ceremonies, 252 names will be added to the **National Law Enforcement Memorial Wall** and among them three officers from Missouri killed in the line of duty last year.

Tragic events are something that stick with many of us, they mark our lives, and recall memories that we struggle with. Yet, often our law enforcement officers and first responders are individuals who put themselves in those positions to protect us and keep us safe. One of the most profound memories I have was from December of 2002, when Chief Deputy Joann Barnes of the Dent County Sheriff's Department was fatally shot as she approached the scene of a double murder investigation. Joann's murder rocked my hometown community. A lot of people knew Joann, we also knew she wasn't someone that needed the job, but she was proud of her community and committed to service and her absence was going to be profound.

More recently, our community was witness to another heart-wrenching event, that also highlighted the heroism of our men and women in blue. Police Lieutenant Brad Smith and Corporal Cary Dunavan were called to the scene of a car accident in Cape Girardeau where a couple, including a pregnant woman, were ejected from their vehicle. Without hesitation, both officers raced to the scene of the accident to try and save the victim's lives. Tragically, the pregnant mother did not survive the crash, but thanks to the actions of these officers who performed CPR until the paramedics arrived doctors were later able to save the life of the unborn child. Time and again, in the eyes of danger and disaster our law

enforcement officials waded right in to harm's way to keep us safe and bring stability to crisis. They do this with their own families often waiting anxiously at home.

We also know that for a police officer "off-duty" does not really exist because their training and commitment is always ready to be called to service. That is one of the reasons we passed legislation last week to make it easier for off-duty officers to carry their firearms. It is of utmost importance that those who protect our communities are also protected so that they can do their jobs, even if we never need or call upon them.

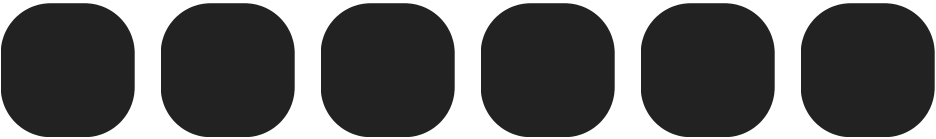
This week is not only a tribute to those in law enforcement who go to work every day to protect our communities, but also a time to remember those who never returned home. It is a time to remember the people like Joann Barnes or be grateful for the service of Lieutenant Smith and Corporal Dunavan. We never know when tragedy or crisis may hit, but we are fortunate that we have people who are ready to answer our call in a moment's notice.

**Please take the time this week to thank a law enforcement officer in your community for putting their lives on the line, reminding us to do the right thing, or protecting and keeping us safe even when we aren't expecting it.**

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# Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, May 13, 2016

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MAY 16TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, May 13, 2016

## **Prescription Pain: Killers**

**May 13, 2016**

America is facing an epidemic of opioid addiction that is sadly killing 78 people every day. Statistically, the chances are greater that you know someone who has been affected by opioid abuse than not. In fact, 1 in 5 Americans have a family member who's suffered from addiction to prescription painkillers.

The harsh reality is that the epidemic has reached every single state and region of our country. The faces of opioid abusers are familiar to us all, they are the high school quarterback, the straight A college student or the mother of 3 next-door. As a result, this week the U.S. House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to combat America's prescription painkiller crisis by targeting programs to improve addiction recovery and substance abuse programs for at risk high schoolers and college students, improve treatment for families, veterans, women, and even pregnant mothers who can pass addiction on to newborns.

When most people think of drug addiction they think of those who abuse drugs found on the street such as crack cocaine or heroin, but the problem today is much greater and much more complex than the class of drugs we have all heard of before. Opioids include prescription pain relievers like hydrocodone, morphine and oxycodone. The reality is that it is this class of drugs; the kind which can be found at home in your medicine cabinet, that is most commonly abused and killing thousands of people. Of the 21.5 million Americans age 12 or older that had a substance abuse disorder in 2014, 1.9 million had a disorder involving prescription opiate-based painkillers. Deaths from drug overdoses even outpace deaths from motor vehicle accidents; in 2013, 10,000 more people died as a result of drug overdose than a motor vehicle accident. The epidemic is real, and it is here.

Missouri has been impacted drastically by the growing opioid abuse crisis. Sadly, Missouri has the highest rate of opioid use in the Midwest. It is estimated 235,000 Missourians misuse prescription drugs annually. What’s even more alarming is that between 2007 and 2012, Missouri had a 124 percent increase in treatment admissions related to prescription drugs and without action, this number will only increase. Opioid abuse does not discriminate in Missouri and does not discriminate in the towns and close knit communities it impacts across the nation. The epidemic is killing Missourians of all backgrounds, ages and colors.

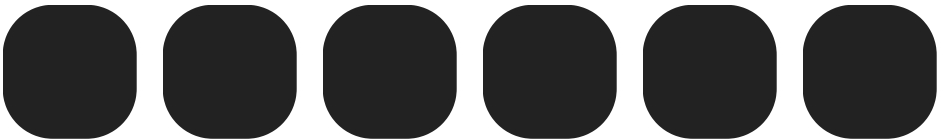
This week, I along with my colleagues in the House, put politics aside and focused on addressing the country’s opioid abuse epidemic to save lives across the country. This set of proposed laws includes measures instructing the Attorney General to dedicate more resources to states trying to combat opioid addiction and improving early intervention and treatment for children born with opioids in their system. In addition, we passed bills dedicating further resources for development of drugs to counteract a prescription drug overdose, establishing addiction mitigation programs specifically for veterans, women and teens and supporting law enforcement’s efforts to combat drug trafficking.

These efforts mark an important step in the direction of combatting the opioid epidemic that is claiming thousands of lives across this country. It is time that we help victims of this epidemic reclaim and rebuild their lives to ensure that they get a chance to have a bright future and find their own American dream.

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# Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 15, 2016

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APRIL 18TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, April 15, 2016

## **Congressman Jason Smith Capitol Report A TAXing Week April 15th, 2016**

Benjamin Franklin once said, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” As the fear of another tax day approaches, these words ring true for most Americans.

Over 150 million people find themselves stressing this week to file their taxes and figure out how much they owe before the April 18th deadline. When faced with an over 70,000 page, 4 million word federal tax code it’s no wonder that the average taxpayer spends over 8 hours and \$120 to have someone else file their individual tax return for them. To put that in perspective that’s close to 1.35 billion man hours and \$20 billion in compliance costs nationwide for all filers - and that’s the cost just to file ones taxes, not even the underlying tax burden!

What it comes down to is that our tax code is just too cumbersome, to confusing and costs you and your family too much. In fact, most Americans need to work 107 days just to be able to earn enough to pay their tax liability for that year. That is over three months of hard-earned wages going directly towards paying your tax bill this year. Americans now spend more to fulfill their annual tax obligations then they do on necessities such as shelter, food and clothing. We need a tax code that is aimed at helping American families, not hurting them. I believe that you are a better steward and deserve to keep more of your hard earned money than the government and it is one of the exact reasons I fought to get on the House Ways & Means Committee with jurisdiction over all federal tax issues.

You deserve a tax system which is simpler, fairer and flatter. Along with my colleagues on the Ways & Means Committee, I am working on a proposal to collapse the half a dozen tax rates into two simple ones while simultaneously reducing tax rates on families, farmers and small business owners. We owe it to you to make filing your taxes so simple that it can be completed on one sheet of paper, the size of a postcard. The current myriad

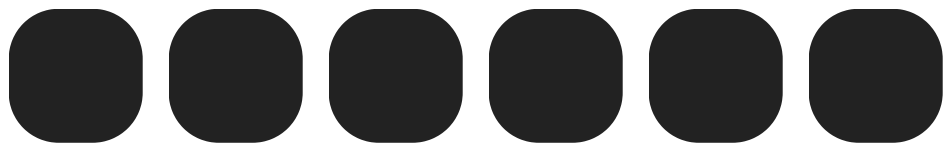
of deductions, credits, and exemptions only benefits the special interests of a few while ultimately meaning you and your family pay more to make up the short fall. In 1960, 17 of the 20 largest companies in the world were headquartered here in the U.S...today that number sits at 6. Our tax code should promote economic growth, should be of assistance to you and your family and should help bring our economy into the 21st century, not be a deterrent to it. We should want American based companies to stay here, for foreign based companies to relocate here and for small business owners to be rewarded for their risk taking and hiring. We can get there through making our tax code attractive to investors, entrepreneurs and employers. The surest bet to increase wages in this country is to renew demand for the American worker, and we can get there reforming and simplifying our tax code so that America is once again the place businesses want to expand, invest, grow, and hire.

Ever increasing taxes to fulfill an insatiable appetite for Washington spending is no way to garner growth in this country. You deserve a government which rewards your hard work and a tax system which incentivizes success here at home, not one which punishes it. When we tax the fruits of hard work by American families, we punish those doing the most to move our country forward. Let this be the last tax day we fear scrambling for old receipts, payroll stubs and pencil sharpeners by renewing the call to overhaul an outdated and cumbersome tax code, replacing it with one which rewards, incentivizes and stimulates success & growth for you and your family here at home.

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