

Week of November 8, 2010



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Honoring Our Veterans

Even though it was cool and overcast on Veterans Day this year, there are warm memories of Veterans Days passed.

In 1918, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day in the eleventh month, the world rejoiced and celebrated. After four years of bitter war, an armistice was signed. The "war to end all wars" was over.

November 11, 1919 was set aside as Armistice Day in the United States, to remember the sacrifices that men and women made during World War I in order to ensure a lasting peace. On Armistice Day, soldiers who survived the war marched in a parade through their home towns to celebrate victory over a common enemy. Congress voted Armistice Day a federal holiday in 1938, 20 years after the war ended. But Americans soon realized that the previous war would not be the last one. World War II began in 1939 and, again, nations participated in a bloody struggle. After the Second World War, Armistice Day continued to be observed on November 11. Later, Congress passed a bill renaming the federal holiday to Veterans Day. In 1971, President Nixon declared it a federal holiday on the second Monday in November. Today, Americans still give thanks for peace on Veterans Day.

During the 2010 Legislative Session, I handled some important pieces of legislation pertaining directly to Missouri's veterans. House Bill 1524 is a bill I handled that contains several provisions including allowing overseas service members to request and receive voter registrations applications and absentee ballots electronically and requiring state and local governments to give a measured preference to service-disabled veteran business when contracting for a job or service. I also handled HB 2147 in the senate that exempts dependents of retired military members from the A+ Schools Program's three-year attendance requirement if they relocate to Missouri within one year of retirement from active duty.

In addition, I sponsored SB 940 that relaxes bingo regulations, enabling charitable organizations across the state to raise more funds to support veterans' causes. Another bill I sponsored was SB 733 that protects Bright Flight scholarships for military students. More specifically, if a recipient cannot attend an approved institution because of military service with the United States Armed Forces, the student will receive the scholarship if he or she returns to full-time student status within six months after completing military service. Another veterans' bill, HB 1893, increases funding for the Veterans Commission Capital Improvement Trust Fund (VCCITF) by directing a percentage of funds received from gaming to the trust fund. Those may be used for capital costs at veterans' homes and cemeteries or transfers to the Veterans Home Funds, which match funds for veterans service officer programs and helps with expenses incurred by the Missouri Veterans Commission..

Veterans Service offices are conveniently located in almost every county across the state, providing easy access to all veterans. In the 31st Senatorial District, main offices are located in Warrensburg (Missouri Veterans Home, 1300 Veterans Rd., 660-543-7930) and Nevada (621 E. Highland Ave., Ste. #3, 417-448-1133). The Nevada office also travels to Harrisonville (National Guard Armory, 1503 Jefferson Pkwy, 816-887-5710), Belton County (VA Outpatient Clinic, 17140 Bel Ray Place, 816-922-2161), Cass and Butler Counties (Driver's Examination Office, 2-4 West Ohio St., 417-448-1133), and Bates County at scheduled times during the month (call for more detailed information). You may also contact the main office at 573-751-3779.

Many times in this world, we get so busy with our daily lives it is difficult to remember to thank everyone for the things that make our lives better, both in big and small ways. Veterans Day is an opportunity to make sure that the men and women who have given their time and efforts in service to our great nation know exactly how much we appreciate them.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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