



November 11, 2005

The veterans of the War for Independence, who founded our country, waited decades for their pay. Ten years after World War I, veterans marched on our nation's Capitol to get their promised bonus pay. They did not get it. Instead, they were thrown out of town by the active military under the orders of President Hoover.

We live with the memory of Viet Nam veterans dishonored upon coming home, and who continue to pay a political price for their honorable service in a nation that has failed to sort out its feelings about that war.

We meet today, not to celebrate romantic patriotism, but to remind our government that it owes a great debt to those who protect us.

It is not enough to say: "Thanks for our freedom." Let us honor their service in a fashion that is worthy of our thankful nation. No other group of Americans has stood stronger and braver for democracy than our veterans.

The Democratic Party has a long history of striving to protect the troops and veterans that have protected us.

We must honor these courageous and faithful men and women:

- by ending unfair taxes on military families and disabled military retirees;
- by raising the pay of military personnel;
- by protecting the families who remain at home; and,
- by improving veterans health care once their duty has been completed.

It is our moral obligation.

A stronger America is fought for abroad, but it is kept healthy at home. All Americans, regardless of political party or feelings about our ongoing wars, need to support veterans, not just for this one day, but every day.

We must make sure that disabled veterans retain their benefits. We must make sure that our veterans, especially those wounded in combat, get prompt and effective medical care. We must make sure that their surviving families do not suffer because of their service.

More than 130,000 veterans from the first Gulf War are disabled, and thousands more are coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our veterans do not deserve red tape, benefit cuts, the contemptible disrespect of Washington cost-cutters.

We must make sure that the men and women who serve in our armed forces -- these brave soldiers who return prone to domestic violence, divorce, and suicide -- get the help and counseling they need to re-enter the civilian world.

We need **an end to the chicken-hawk politicians** who go out into the community to praise our troops; but, on the floor of the Congress ignore their needs and disrespect their service.

I am honored to stand before you today to announce the formation of the Utah State Democratic Party Veteran and Military Families Caucus.

This group will focus their energies as a watch-dog on our government's veteran's policies and assist in the further development of the Democratic Party's policy on veterans affairs.

I am also privileged to be here in support of these fine State Legislators who are sponsoring legislation that honors our military families.

Thank you.

Speech for USDC Chair, Wayne Holland, Jr.
Veterans Day address to announce the birth of the **Utah State Democratic Party
Veteran's and Military Families Caucus**