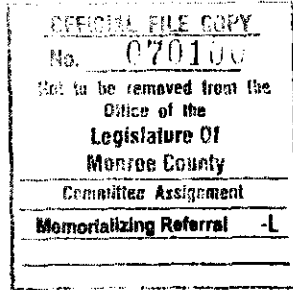


Monroe County Legislature

C. STEPHEN ECKEL
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 26

C. STEPHEN ECKEL
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 26
270 SENECA PARKWAY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14613
OFFICE (585) 753-1940
HOME (585) 439-5170
E-MAIL: seckel@stevceckel.com



March 7, 2007

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: Memorializing the U.S. Congress and President George W. Bush to Take Immediate Actions to Improve Conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and Provide Proper Services to Our Wounded Servicemen and Women

Honorable Legislators:

Every day, young men and women who have voluntarily made a commitment to secure our great nation return from Iraq and Afghanistan with devastating injuries. While advances in technology and medicine have helped to save more lives on the battlefield, still, an alarming number of our troops come home with severe physical and psychological wounds.

In exchange for their sacrifice and service, our troops deserve the best in care. An investigation by the *Washington Post* uncovered that the Federal Government is failing to provide for these young men and women, subjecting them to an elaborate bureaucracy before they can receive services they have rightly earned.

According to the *Washington Post*, 75 percent of the troops treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center reported their experiences as "stressful." The newspaper reported horrifying stories of amputees wandering the 113-acre hospital campus searching for their rooms, brain-injured soldiers left alone in their rooms for days because they are not reminded of appointments and a growing dependency on alcohol and illegal drugs to cope. Soldiers are required to file twenty-two documents with eight different commands at a variety of locations; some must show their purple hearts to prove their service to our nation. Alarming amounts of mold, mice, and other vermin infest the rooms of building

18, where wounded soldiers reside. The conditions reported by the *Washington Post*, we are told, may only be the tip of the iceberg.

It is a disgrace that the Federal Government has failed to provide oversight and accountability in managing the treatment of our active-duty troops and veterans at Walter Reed. The Bush Administration is calling for an additional 21,500 troops to be sent for an escalation of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; officials at Walter Reed are preparing for an increased flow of casualties. Before we commit our brave troops to battle, it is imperative that we ensure that we are able to support them when they return home. While it is encouraging that Congress has begun to hold hearings regarding the substandard conditions of outpatient services at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, this must be a first of many steps taken, to make right a reprehensible wrong.

Therefore, we urge you to join me in demanding that the U.S. Congress and President George W. Bush to do all within their authority to immediately improve the conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and reform the military's health care system in order to guarantee that all of our courageous servicemen and women returning from battle will be supported and cared for in a manner to which they are duly entitled.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carla M. Palumbo
Democratic Leader

C. Stephen Eckel
Legislator - District 26

Harry B. Bronson
Assistant Democratic Leader

Travis R. Heider
Legislator - District 14

Ted O'Brien
Legislator - District 17

Carrie M. Andrews
Legislator - District 21

Paul E. Haney
Legislator - District 23

Willie J. Lightfoot
Legislator - District 27