

DEMOCRATS ABROAD PLATFORM 2016 ★ 01 JULY 2016

Supporting Our Military

Democrats Abroad fully supports the men and women of our armed forces whose extraordinary service receives our deepest respect and gratitude. Future initiatives and policy should be closely analyzed and critiqued on its ability to provide security to the U.S. and its interests.

MILITARY POLICY

We:

FAVOR military policies that minimize civilian casualties, which endanger relations essential to our goals, to the maximum extent consistent with the safety of our troops.

APPLAUD President Obama for cutting or eliminating wasteful military spending as well as his recommendations to Congress to increase pay and benefits for military.

URGE a review of U.S. military bases worldwide in order to determine current and foreseeable utility, bearing in mind that closing some bases may affect U.S. veterans in the area, a consequence that must be considered in all its aspects.

FAVOR a strict restriction on the policy of outsourcing critical security and military functions to private contractors as a default mechanism for conflict and increased funding for outreach, recruitment, training, and retaining of young Americans for our armed forces.

URGE the enforcement of ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations) on U.S. private military contractors, who must first seek the approval of the (DDTC) Directorate of Defense Trade Controls within the State Department before providing military services.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

We:

FAVOR providing our military personnel with the training and resources needed to meet the challenges they are most likely to face in today's world: peacekeeping missions, anti-terrorist operations, and emergency humanitarian actions.

FAVOR a policy that awards the Purple Heart, along with relevant additional care and benefits, to all injured military personnel and veterans suffering from properly verified mental injury incurred during military service (notably PTSD) so that mental and physical war injuries have appropriate recognition, honor, and compensation.

PROMOTE initiatives of gender equality such as those that have led to opening the Army Infantry, Armor, and Spec Ops Units to women in 2016.

APPLAUD setting an example for wellness and dynamism by allowing active duty members to participate in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

SUPPORT non-discriminatory appearance codes that suit all troops regardless of race, religion, gender expression, or other innate characteristics.

PRAISE Obama's Administration decision to raise funding for the prevention of sexual assault and harassment within the military and SUPPORT the Military Justice Improvement Act to reform the handling of sexual assault in the military.

SUPPORT a military and civilian interface through efforts towards proactive civilian integration.

Honoring Our VETERANS AND TROOPS

We:

FAVOR full healthcare for veterans, their domestic partners, and children and VIEW as a sign of progress in this area Congressional efforts to expand CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2015 coverage in bills in both the House and the Senate.

FAVOR facilitating and expediting citizenship for immigrants who have honorably completed their U.S. military service.

APPLAUD the continued success of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to extend educational benefits to more veterans and active-service members of the military, including the military spouse and family education accessibility, transferability, and support services for military spouse career advancement.

URGE the U.S. Government to discontinue the recognition of undergraduate and graduate degrees granted by some for-profit colleges and universities, in support of President Obama's 2012 Executive Order to stop predatory abuses of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill program.

FAVOR the right of every veteran to an appropriate military funeral.

GOVERNMENT POLICY IMPACTING VETERANS

We:

FAVOR permanent statutory funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and OPPOSE all efforts to privatize the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

FAVOR linking the VHA's future medical requirements to U.S. Military Combatant Commands Contingency Plans.

APPLAUD extensions to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by the Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014, allowing the continuation of extra funding to the VHA to strengthen and expand its network of medical centers, state-supported nursing homes, and national cemeteries.

SUPPORT increased funding to the VHA, particularly for mental health care for returning soldiers and

SUPPORT continued efforts to address veteran homelessness, unemployment, and mental illness.

APPLAUD the initiative of the Obama White House in collaboration with the DVA and the Department of Labor in continuing the Veterans Employment Center, Job Bank, and National Resource Directory.

DEPLORE the suppression of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act and also the VRAP (Veterans Retraining Assistance Program).

URGE the U.S. Congress to refrain from sequestering funds from the budget of the DVA, which led to the shutdown of military cemeteries throughout the world in 2013.

DEPLORE the neglect of thousands of veterans who helped clean up nuclear test sites in the Marshall Islands between 1977 and 1980, 35% of whom now suffer cancer from their exposure to radiation,

URGE Congress to support the efforts of Congressmen Al Franken,

Mark Takai, Ted Lieu, Brad Ashford, Mark Takano, and Mark Pocan to have them recognized as "Atomic Veterans" and

CALL FOR the DVA to provide them and all veterans exposed to

radiation during their military service with the quality health care and the compensation they deserve.

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