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YOUR ISSUES YOUR AGENDA • SPRING 2001



Congressman Fletcher Continues Fight For Veterans' Benefits

LEGISLATION ENSURES PROMISES MADE ARE PROMISES KEPT

Congressman Fletcher continues to be a strong voice in Congress for Central Kentucky's Veterans. Since coming to Washington, the Congressman has worked hard with Veterans' Affairs and the Kentucky Department of Veterans' Affairs to ensure that quality health care will remain in

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Central Kentucky, that primary care will be expanded and that long-term health care will continue to be available at the Leestown Veterans facility. We must guarantee that our Veterans receive the health care they were promised. Since they risked their lives to protect our freedom, it is incumbent on us to see that they receive the support they need.

Congressman Fletcher is working on legislation during the 107th Congress to provide support for Central Kentucky Veterans. Two specific bills are:

Keep Our Promises to America's Retirees Act - Allows Veterans to opt out of TRICARE and join the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. This will provide more convenient and effective health care for Veterans. TRICARE is only offered at Department of Defense hospitals and facilities. With cuts affecting many of these services, Veterans need flexibility in order to visit private hospitals and doctors to receive the quality health care they deserve.

Retired Pay Restoration Act - Enables Armed Forces retirees with a service-connected disability to receive both their hard-earned military retirement pay and Veteran's disability compensation. Americans disabled while serving their country should not be penalized with a cut in retirement benefits to pay for their health care.



In addition to his work to assure care for retired military folks, Congressman Fletcher is working through his seat on the Budget Committee to ensure today's military receives the funding it needs to effectively protect U.S. citizens. For FY 2002, the budget provides \$324.8 billion for national defense, which is an increase of \$14.2 billion. Increased pay, better housing and expanded health benefits are included in this increase of \$5.7 billion. No individual serving their country should have to depend on food stamps to feed their family. Quality of life in our military has been neglected for too long. Funding increases in this budget will begin to rectify this problem.

Congressman Fletcher also remains committed to bringing America's military commitments back in line with its own security concerns. He supports a policy ensuring that before American troops are engaged in regional conflicts, action must have a clearly defined objective in line with American national security interests and a clear exit strategy. It is unfair to place our troops in the line of fire without adequate training, weaponry, and mission parameters. Most importantly, our military should always have support from citizens at home.

Providing quality health care and benefits to Veterans and investing in the United Armed Forces are two priorities for Congressman Fletcher in the 107th Congress. He will continue to fight to keep America's promise to its service men and women.



Rep. Fletcher recently visited with patients at the Leestown VA Hospital to learn about VA funding.

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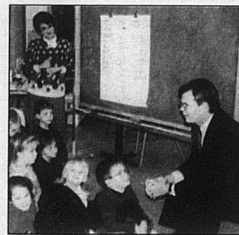
"Leave No Child Behind"

Education Decisions Will Be Made by Parents, Teachers and Local Communities

There is no mission more important to our nation than education reform. For most of the past two decades, America has witnessed economic growth and prosperity, yet our public education system continues to leave some children unprepared for the future. The achievement gap grows wider in key subject areas like reading.

The education gap between students of all economic and racial backgrounds is a national crisis that demands a united response from everyone in our society. We share the responsibility for crafting solutions that will serve the next generation of students.

When President George W. Bush was sworn in on January 20th as the nation's 43rd President, he pledged to make education his top priority. His words were simple, but powerful: Leave No Child Behind. To achieve this goal, the President recently unveiled his education plan. The centerpiece of his proposal focuses on closing the achievement gap and establishing equality for the most disadvantaged students through flexibility, accountability, and high standards.



Rep. Fletcher answers questions at Senate Elementary school education program.

Flexibility to Parents, Teachers and Local Communities

President Bush and Congress are determined to give as much flexibility as possible to parents, teachers and local communities. More schools will be able to operate Title I programs on a school-wide basis and technology grant funds will be consolidated and distributed to schools through states and local districts.

Parents will be enabled to make informed choices about schools for their children through access to school-by-school report cards on student achievement for all groups of students. Schools will be graded by a system with which we are all familiar: A, B, C, D, or F.

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Accountability for Improving Student Achievement

States will be held accountable for improving student achievement through annual state tests in reading and math for students in grades three through eight. These annual assessments will enable schools and parents to correct problems before they affect learning.

In addition, more federal funding targeting disadvantaged schools will be available. Along with the increased federal commitment to education, states and school districts will be given more freedom to use that funding. The President's plan calls for streamlining the number of education programs under federal law, eliminating duplicate programs and improving those programs that help children the most.

High Standards are Expected

The President's plan contains a number of other changes to bring better results to public education. Congressman Fletcher applauds the proposal to improve literacy and teacher quality, both of which are vital to increased student achievement. By investing \$5 billion

in states that establish comprehensive and scientifically based reading programs, children will acquire the basic skills they need to learn and prosper in the 21st Century.

The President has made a commitment to strengthen math and science education and to increase the percentage of classes in core academic subject areas taught by qualified teachers. Schools will also be able to receive technology funds without the burden of submitting massive amounts of paperwork.

Congressman Fletcher believes in Leaving No Child Behind and is confident the President's plan will earn bipartisan support in Congress and become law this year. There is an opportunity this year to build a strong foundation for Kentucky by making sure that future generations are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st Century and enjoy the prosperity that a great education can bring.



Rep. Fletcher talks with students from Jenks Elementary in Danville about the importance of education achievement.