

# The Importance of Family

*June 10, 2010*

No one plays a more pivotal role in the morale, care and welfare of disabled veterans than family members. As we move passed Mother's Day and look forward to Father's Day, we pause to reflect on the contributions of those who form the support system for disabled veterans.

Disabled veterans often take the main stage. They are the heroes. They are the ones who faced fire and whose sacrifices are well documented. But in the shadows of their spotlight are the women and men who quietly make the lives of their heroes worth living.

In our recent landmark victory, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act became reality. For the first time, we have pressed our elected officials to recognize the service of family members and those in support roles who act as care providers for disabled, ill and injured veterans.

It's focused primarily on the family members of recently disabled veterans who are giving up their careers in startling numbers to become full time care providers for their husbands, wives and children who are miraculously survived unthinkable horrors in combat.

In addition to providing the family members a stipend based on how much care they provide, it offers training, counseling and services for care providers for veterans of all generations.

We recognize this legislation as an initial victory in an area that deserves more of our attention. We know, as do our partners in the DAV Auxiliary, that we still have a long way to go in recognizing the contributions of our family members.

To that end, we would be remiss if we didn't also recognize

the family members of those who have fallen. More than 5,400 of our brothers and sisters have paid the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan alone. In any war, and we've seen many, it takes generations for a family to recover from this type of loss.

The needs of the parents, spouses and children of our veterans and their survivors deserve our utmost attention in everything we do.

If our goal is to build better lives for disabled veterans, we must look at the individuals whose contributions make our lives so much more worthwhile than they would be otherwise. As you reach out to celebrate Independence Day and other holidays, please thank your families.

And look for ways and future legislation that can give them the recognition and support they need as they share in our service and sacrifices.