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Congressman Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Fighting for Warfighters

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***Congressman Smith Capitol Report
Fighting for Warfighters
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Our grateful nation owes a massive debt of gratitude to the veterans who have fought to protect our country and its freedoms. As I accompanied President Trump this week on Air Force One for his fourth trip to Missouri since becoming president, I saw how devoted he is to fight on their behalf so every veteran receives the best possible treatment upon returning home. I spent some quality time with the president and saw his deep love for both the state of Missouri and the men and women who have served in uniform.

The scene inside the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in Kansas City was electric. The VFW is the oldest major veterans organization in the country and thousands of men and women who served our country packed into the arena to hear the Commander in Chief speak. The president laid out the progress his administration is making domestically to better prepare our military and take care of our veterans and stated the incredible progress our military has made on the world stage eradicating ISIS. You could feel the raw emotion in the room as the president announced that as a direct result of his negotiations with North Korea, the United States has begun to recover the remains of soldiers who lost their lives in the Korean War. The families and brothers-in-arms of our fallen heroes have waited too long for this day, but they will finally be able to lay their

loved ones to rest on American soil.

When our veterans were called to serve, they fought and won our wars. There were no empty promises, just responsibility to duty and love for country. Now it is our duty to answer their call to fix the VA and provide them what they need to adjust back into civilian life. President Trump and I aren't interested in empty words, we're committed to producing concrete results to increase veterans' quality of life.

I was part of the team that sent a bill to President Trump's desk which gives the Veterans Affairs Secretary the ability to fire the bad actors who mistreat or neglect our veterans. Together we overhauled the VA Choice program, scrapping the 30-day and 40-mile distance requirements holding veterans back from receiving timely care outside of the VA. We expanded GI benefits, so veterans can seek higher education when it's the right time for them. Our troops put many aspects of their lives on hold for us when they serve; they don't need an arbitrary government time limit to receive an education.

Veterans, especially rural veterans, deserve access to quality care no matter where they live. Recently I worked on behalf of rural Missouri veterans to increase accessibility at the Salem VA clinic. I presented the VA medical director with petitions from 5,700 people who felt they were being underserved by the VA clinic only providing services two days a month. Today the clinic has expanded their staff and the services they offer to veterans.

My flight to Kansas City with the president was our fourth trip to Missouri together since he was sworn in. One year ago, the president and I were in Springfield so I could show him how rural America would benefit from a simplified tax code. We stood together in St. Charles in November before Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the result of months of negotiations to cut taxes provide relief to working families and small businesses. In March we traveled to St. Louis, in the spirit of the Show Me State, to hear from businesses finding new life under an updated tax code. I was proud to be with the president in Kansas City at the VFW National Convention and see his respect for the brave men and women who defend our country and its flag, and I'll be with him as we honor our commitments to the veterans who have served this country.

The veterans of the United States are the reason our freedom is possible. They answered the call to serve when our nation needed them. President Trump and I are devoted to answering their call for better care from the government they risked everything to defend and protect.

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