

U.S. Congressman  
**Nick Rahall**  
*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 15, 1991

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**RAHALL URGES PASSAGE OF WAR STRESS TREATMENT BILL**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today urged his colleagues to join him in supporting legislation designed to expand services for Vietnam veterans and post-Vietnam veterans who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The bill, H.R. 841, is strongly supported by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

"With the War in the Gulf bringing into even sharper focus the plight of the veteran, we must act as quickly as possible to see that all of those who served their country proudly receive the treatment they deserve," said Rahall.

PTSD affects some 850,000 Vietnam veterans, but the Veterans Administration (VA) is critically understaffed to treat these veterans. The new measure would expand the store-front "Vet Center" program by 40 "Vet Centers" over four years. Inpatient PTSD units operated by the VA, of which there are only 20 at the present time, would be increased by 30 units. Also, the number of PTSD clinical teams (PCTs) would swell by 50 over four years.

"The time to act is now," said Rahall. "We cannot afford to misunderstand the complexity of the trauma that our veterans face. Their hope and faith in America must not be lost when they return home. And that means supporting them, not only by waving flags at parades, but by backing up our words with better medical care, better benefits, and hope for a better life."

Currently, there are seven store-front Vet Centers in West Virginia serving: Beckley, Charleston, Huntington, Martinsburg, Morgantown, Princeton, and Wheeling. There are four Veterans Hospitals that will be impacted serving: Beckley, Clarksburg, Huntington, and Martinsburg.

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Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.  
1224 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005-5183

(202) 628-2700  
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Can you will you cosponsor  
Jontz's bill - dm

I agree. *Yes*

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March 21, 1991

Let's do PR on  
also *sent* *yes*

Dear Representative:

Last year, on October 15, the House unanimously passed health legislation, HR.5740, part of which contained provisions to expand services for veterans suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The PTSD provisions of that bill derived from legislation pending in the 101st Congress, HR.3037, introduced by Representative Jim Jontz. Unfortunately, the measure was never taken up by the full Senate before the 101st Congress adjourned. *\* This year, a nearly identical bill has been introduced by Representative Jontz, HR.841, and the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) strongly encourages your cosponsorship.*

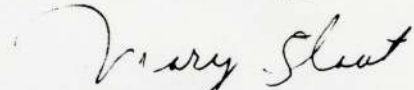
In essence this year's bill continues to recognize the near epidemic size of the PTSD problem besetting Vietnam veterans, some 850,000 of whom continue to suffer with either full blown PTSD or diagnosable components of the disorder. This year, however, with the nation again having become engaged in conflict overseas, the legislation further recognizes the need to extend the availability of psychological counseling to post Vietnam era war-time veterans.

To accomplish its goals, the new measure would phase in an expansion of the store-front "Vet Center" program by 40 "Vet Centers" over the course of four years. Inpatient PTSD units operated by the VA, of which there are only 20 system wide at the present time, would be increased in number by 30 such units over the same period. In addition to this, so as to assure proper treatment of PTSD in VA facilities lacking inpatient PTSD units or nearby "Vet Centers", the number of PTSD clinical teams (PCTs) would be increased by 50 over four years.

The importance of taking the steps contemplated by HR.841 is that so little has been done by the VA of its own accord to address the magnitude of the PTSD epidemic. Similarly, it is critically important that veterans with PTSD who are treated in VA general psychology or psychiatry inpatient, outpatient or other clinics lacking expertise in PTSD be treated for the proper disorder. Today no such guaranty of proper treatment exists.

As stated at the outset, similar legislation was passed unanimously last October. The need for legislation this year on this topic is even greater than last year. The Vietnam Veterans of America looks forward to relying on your renewed support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mary R. Stout". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Mary R. Stout  
President