

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2008

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## **Frelinghuysen No Champion of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans**

Parsippany, October 7—Representative Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, R-Harding, and Scott Garrett, R-Wantage, were tied for the worst score in the New Jersey Congressional delegation, according to a scorecard issued by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) Action Fund, an organization representing veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

In the 2008 IAVA Congressional scorecard, four of New Jersey's members of the House of Representatives scored an A+ (a perfect score of 15): Bill Pascrell, (D-8) Steve Rothman (D-9), Rush Holt (D-12), and Albio Sires (D-13). Six others scored an A, which represented a score of 13 or 14: Robert Andrews (D-1), Frank LoBiondo (R-2), Chris Smith (R-4), Frank Pallone (D-6), Michael Ferguson (R-7), and Donald Payne (D-10). Jim Saxton (R-3) got a B for scoring 11 out of 15, and Scott Garrett (R-5) and Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11) each got a B for scoring only 10 out of 15.

Tom Wyka (D, Parsippany), who is running against Rodney Frelinghuysen in the 11<sup>th</sup> district, explains:

- “You might think that a B is good, but it means that Frelinghuysen voted against healthcare and education for veterans.”
- “The IAVA’s grades are generous. Ron Paul got the only F. Only four members got a D, and only 34 members got a C. All of those who got a C, D, or F were Republicans. In contrast, all of the 122 members who got an A+ were Democrats.”
- “Only one Democrat in the entire House of Representatives scored as low as Frelinghuysen did, but it was because of absences, not hostile votes. In contrast, 100 Republicans scored better than Frelinghuysen did.”
- “Frelinghuysen and Garrett’s scores of 10 out of 15 are an embarrassment for the New Jersey delegation, most of whom got A+ or A. Both Frelinghuysen and Garrett have provided poor support to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The same can be said of the Republican Party as a whole.”
- “Not only does Frelinghuysen have a poor voting record on veterans’ issues, he seldom introduces or cosponsors legislation endorsed by major veterans’ organizations.”

“The IAVA is a nonpartisan organization, so we had to put the scores into a spreadsheet and add the data on party affiliation,” explains Wyka.

According to the IAVA Action Fund’s report, the scorecard for the House of Representatives is based on 13 key votes on veterans’ issues. Each of these votes was an opportunity for the Representative to take a stand on behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The Representative got one point for each vote that was in line with IAVA Action Fund’s position. The Representative didn’t get a point if he or she voted against the IAVA position or failed to vote on the issue. Because the fight for the new GI Bill was considered to be so important, Representatives who cosponsored the bill (H.B. 5740) got two additional points in the scorecard. The scorecard included a score for each of the Representatives except those who did not serve a complete term, such as Tom Lantos, who died in office. Nancy Pelosi was also excluded from the scoring, because as Speaker of the House, she votes only in the case of a tie.

## **WHY FRELINGHUYSEN SCORED POORLY**

## **Cosponsorship of H.B. 5740**

Frelinghuysen lost 2 points because he was not among the [302 cosponsors](#) of this bill.

## **Funding Veterans' Health Care, 2007**

*January 31, 2007; [Roll Call Vote No. 72](#)*

IAVA Action supported this legislation, which passed 286 to 140; Frelinghuysen voted against it.

The IAVA scorecard says, "More than five million American veterans rely on the Department of Veterans Affairs for their health care. Although veterans' hospitals provide some of the best health care in the country, the VA has been underfunded for years; for FY2007, the Bush Administration requested almost \$4 billion less in VA funding than the amount suggested by major veterans' organizations. In early 2007, Congress made veterans' health care a priority, increasing the funding for veterans' health care by \$3.6 billion. The budget passed by a vote of 286-140."

## **The Post-9/11 GI Bill: Fair Education Benefits for Veterans (first vote)**

*May 15, 2008; [Roll Call Vote No. 330](#)*

IAVA Action Fund supported this legislation, which passed 256 to 166; Frelinghuysen voted against it.

The IAVA scorecard says, "For the 1.7 million veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the transition to civilian life can be challenging. Veterans of World War II were aided in their reintegration by the 'GI Bill,' which paid for the education of eight million combat veterans. The GI Bill changed the lives of millions of American veterans and their families.

Sadly, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, still covered by the peacetime Montgomery GI Bill from 1984, received a far smaller benefit. Many new combat veterans were struggling with student loans or dropping out of school altogether. A new GI Bill was the number one priority for IAVA and IAVA Action in 2008.

“The popular and bipartisan ‘Post- 9/11 GI Bill,’ introduced on the House side by Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ-5), Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA-3), Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL-5), and Rep. Peter King (R-NY-3), offered a new future to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The new GI Bill dramatically increases education benefits by providing tuition payments up to the cost of the most expensive public university in the state, a monthly living allowance, and a book stipend. It also creates a new ‘Yellow Ribbon’ program that matches any scholarship given to a veteran by a school more expensive than the tuition cap. In spring 2008, the new GI Bill was included as part of the domestic spending amendment to the Iraq war funding bill. Because of the concerns of some fiscally conservative ‘Blue Dog’ Democrats in the House, the cost of the GI Bill was given a budget offset (although the cost of the war funding as a whole was not). The offset chosen was a tax increase on individuals making over \$500,000 a year, or couples making over \$1 million annually. The offset lead many Republicans to vote against the measure despite their support for the GI Bill. ”

## **A Second-Rate GI Bill**

*May 23, 2008; [Roll Call Vote No. 364](#)*

IAVA Action opposed this legislation, which failed 186 to 223; Frelinghuysen voted for it.

The IAVA Scorecard says, “For over 18 months, IAVA and IAVA Action worked closely with a bipartisan coalition of Senators and Representatives on a new Post-9/11 GI Bill that would make college

affordable to veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan. The model for the new legislation was the World War II GI Bill that paid for the education of eight million combat veterans, and helped rebuild America after a half-decade of war. The Post-9/11 GI Bill quickly gained the support of 300 cosponsors in the House, almost 60 cosponsors in the Senate, and all the leading Veterans Service Organizations, including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and of course IAVA.

“A small but vocal opposition in Congress argued that the benefit was too generous. In an effort to derail the popular and bipartisan Post-9/11 GI Bill already a part of the war supplemental funding, a motion was made to advance a meager and ill-conceived ‘alternate’ GI Bill before the Post-9/11 GI Bill had the opportunity to be passed and signed into law. This alternative GI Bill did not meet any of IAVA’s requirements for a new GI Bill; it did not cover the cost of college, it did not create fairness for National Guardsmen and Reservists, and because it was not linked to the cost of college, it would lose value every year. It did include a ‘transferability’ benefit, which offered current service members who agree to remain in the military for ten years the opportunity to transfer their GI Bill benefit to their spouse or children. However, because 75% of those serving in the military get out after their first term of service, this benefit will apply to relatively few Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Moreover, transferability was already possible at the discretion of the Department of Defense service secretaries. The weak ‘alternative’ GI Bill received the support of no major veterans’ service organizations.”

## **OTHER VETERANS’ ORGANIZATIONS**

The IAVA Action Fund is not the first organization to point out Frelinghuysen’s poor voting record with regard to veterans’ issues:

### **Disabled American Veterans**

Frelinghuysen voted against everything on the Disabled American Veterans' agenda, except for items that passed unanimously or nearly so.

<http://capwiz.com/dav/bio/keyvotes/?id=393&lvl=C&azip=07054&bzip=V>

### **American Legion**

Frelinghuysen seldom introduces or cosponsors legislation endorsed by the American Legion:

<http://legion.capwiz.com/bio/id/393&lvl=C0>

### **Veterans of Foreign Wars**

Frelinghuysen seldom introduces or cosponsors legislation endorsed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

<http://vfw.capwiz.com/bio/id/393&lvl=C>

### **Vietnam Veterans of America**

Frelinghuysen seldom introduces or cosponsors legislation endorsed by the Vietnam Veterans of America.

<http://vva.capwiz.com/bio/id/393&lvl=C>

### **ADDITIONAL LINKS**

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America 2008 Congressional Report Card:  
<http://www.veteranreportcard.org/reportcard.pdf>

List of party affiliations from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:  
[http://clerk.house.gov/member\\_info/olmbr.html](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/olmbr.html)