

## Restoring the Final Salute to our Vets

10/13/2014

The Honor Guards who provide our veterans with a final funeral tribute from a grateful nation – ‘Taps,’ a rifle salute and an American flag for the family – deserve support and praise, not unwarranted and indefensible budget cuts from the Pentagon.

With that in mind, I have strongly urged Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Army Secretary John McHugh to immediately restore \$21 million in funding Congress intended for the Army National Guard Military Funerals Honors program.

In my letter, I pointed out to the Secretaries that the bipartisan 2015 Defense Appropriations bill, which I supported, provided an overall increase of \$4.1 billion. I told them there is simply no fiscal or moral way to justify a 44 percent reduction in a program that provides a small stipend for the soldiers and veterans who provide a final tribute to their comrades in all seasons, regardless of the weather or any other inconvenience they may encounter along the way.

The fact is – when brave patriots put their lives on the line for us, we owe more than can ever be repaid. The very least we can do is express our solemn gratitude for their ultimate dedication to our great nation by providing a proper salute. Senators Klobuchar and Franken have joined me in weighing in, and together we are determined to restore full funding to the Funerals Honors Program.

I will keep you posted as we continue this battle for the veterans who protect and serve America. Have a great week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.