

I ask you to please read the below letter that was written by Sean Cononie from The American Veterans of the Iraq War National Homeless Coalition, Inc.

I agree and support the ideal that we need to treat the Veterans of the Iraq war far better than we have done in the past to other Veterans.

It only makes sense to have programs that prevent the returning veterans from becoming homeless in the first place.

American Veterans of the Iraq War National Homeless Coalition, Inc

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Dear Member of Congress or US Senator:

As a homeless advocate, and as the founder of the American Veterans of the Iraq War National Homeless Coalition, I ask that the United States Congress please do not allow what happened to the veterans of the Vietnam War to happen to the soldiers returning from Iraq. There is no excuse for us not to learn from the Vietnam Vets. We are able to send astronauts to space, we can deliver bombs with a three-foot margin of error, we can take pictures from cell phones and send them anywhere in the world, and GPS has become a normal household word and yet we can't figure out what is the best way to treat our Veterans in a way they will gain self-sufficiency, benefits quickly, affordable housing, and the programs they need to recover. My question is, have the reentry programs changed since the Vietnam War? Have we come up with better ways to bring the Veterans back home to live a life as a civilian?

The American Veterans of the Iraq War National Homeless Coalition is recommending that there be a national task force today, not tomorrow, to be three steps ahead so we can look to prevent cases of homelessness among Iraq Vets. Congress must have us advocates ready to deliver reports not so we could become a talking society that merely talks but one that reacts, preventing our veterans from becoming homeless in the first place. "Actions speak louder than words." I urge you speak to your fellow Members of Congress and appoint a committee of advocates, veterans of other wars, doctors, caseworkers, providers and people who specialize in post traumatic stress disorder.

Together as a team and learning from our mistakes in the past we can develop a plan that would prevent veterans from becoming homeless. Having a plan that prevents is the right and moral thing to do, and much less expensive in the long run than waiting for a Veteran to become a chronic homeless person. Research indicates that the longer a person is homeless the harder it is to bring them to self-sufficiency than if we react to it quicker and offer better prevention services.

Many of us advocates have already begun the process; the first step is getting Congress to realize that something must be done now, today, and without delay. Any of us would be available to help the US Congress if they needed anyone to testify about ways to improve services now. Presently, almost every community in America is short regular homeless beds. We will not have the number of beds needed to assist the number of possible Iraq Vets and this is a major reason why we need to start now making a system that works. As a team, we all can learn from our mistakes and make it better for the future Vets of America.

Sincerely,
Sean Anthony Cononie
Founder