



Federal Issue Briefing
**Family Safety: A Significant Concern for
 Returning Veterans and Their Families**

You are invited to attend a federal issue briefing to address family safety and communication after war, hosted by Witness Justice and the Veterans Initiative Center and Research Institute, in collaboration with bipartisan U.S. House Caucuses (Addiction, Treatment and Recovery, Mental Health, Veteran's Mental Health, and Victim's Rights), and supported by the Waitt Institute for Violence Prevention.

Briefing Details

Friday, October 24, 2008 from 10 am to 12 pm

Washington, DC - Capitol Hill, Cannon Caucus Room (CHOB 345)

In Collaboration With

**Addiction Treatment and
 Recovery Caucus**

Mental Health Caucus

**Veteran's Mental Health
 Caucus**

Victim's Rights Caucus

Supporters

Briefing Overview

Approximately 1.6 million soldiers have served in Afghanistan and Iraq since October 2001¹. According to a recent study by the RAND Corporation, of this population, about 20%, or 300,000, showed the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or major depression, *yet just over half of them sought treatment*. According to RAND researchers, of the 53% who sought treatment only half received, "minimally adequate" treatment. In other words, of the 300,000 who displayed signs of PTSD or major depression, only a quarter received a modicum of help. While this number reflects those with PTSD, there are still many more returning veterans that have less severe, but still significant trauma wounds from combat that affect their lives, relationships, and future. And in the bigger

U.S. Congressional Supporters

- Rep. Filner (D-CA), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee
- Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL)
- Rep. Michaud (D-ME), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health
- Rep. Hare (D-IL)

Organizational Supporters

- American Institute on Domestic Violence
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
- American Mental Health Counselors Association
- American Probation and Parole Association
- American Psychoanalytic Association
- Andrus Children's Center
- Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
- Campaign for Mental Health Reform
- Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants
- Council on Crime and Justice
- Durham Police Department Victim Services Unit
- Family Nonviolence, Inc.
- Gift from Within
- Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Kent Center for Human and Organizational Development
- Men Can Stop Rape
- Men Stopping Violence
- Mental Health America
- Mental Health Liaison Group
- National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
- National Center on Family Homelessness
- National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
- National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
- National Veterans Foundation
- Sacred Circle: National Resource Center to End Violence Against

picture of who is affected, there are also hundreds of thousands of family members and loved ones who may also need support while their loved one is deployed and after reintegration.

While the recognition of PTSD has been a major step forward, war conditions that create responses like startle response, flashbacks, aggression, and high levels of adrenaline have all played an important role in the struggle to maintain safety at home. The public and political view on trauma-related responses and reactions at home have so far been viewed as domestic violence that requires anger management and other treatments. These responses, however, may have much more to do with the trauma experienced and condition created in war, and much less to do with directed interpersonal violence. In order to prevent these incidents that are so detrimental to family connection and safety, this briefing will focus on the need to educate veterans and their families regarding the impact of prolonged combat trauma and the repeated exposure to violence and how this can change the personal and family dynamic after returning home.

This briefing brings together experts and interest groups representing veterans, military families, crime victim and domestic violence providers, and mental health and substance abuse recovery providers to begin addressing the unique needs of this population in an effort to foster healing while promoting family safety and connection.

¹*Invisible Wounds of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery* (2008). Tanielian, Terry, and Lisa H. Jaycox, eds. The RAND Corporation. Available <http://veterans.rand.org>.

Native Women

- Stop the Silence: Stop Child Sexual Abuse, Inc.
- Therapeutic Communities of America
- Veteran's Health Council
- Veterans' Initiative Center and Research Institute
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Witness Justice

Witness Justice is a national nonprofit organization created by survivors for survivors. Our mission is to advocate for and support victims of violence and trauma. For more information, visit www.WitnessJustice.org.

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Witness Justice | PO Box 475 | Frederick | MD | 21705-0475