

A WAKEUP CALL TO MILITARY AND VETERAN VOTERS
An Idea to Change the Pattern of Broken Promises
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On Veteran's Day, the nation takes time out to honor the men and women who served this nation's military so bravely and so well. We attend parades, we applaud, we wave flags, and we cheer. Then, feeling proud and happy, we go home.

For the next year most of us will never again have cause to think about America's veterans. We naturally assume that they have fared well since leaving the service. We suppose they have sufficient resources to deal with any problem or difficulties that arise in their lives. It never crosses our minds that any basic needs of our veterans, or anyone in the military service of this country, could possibly be overlooked or neglected by those in government. How wrong we are.

In fact, veteran and military issues traditionally have been on the back burners of Congressional concern. Every election year, promises are made by legislators to improve matters. "Things will be better," they assure those who approach them, "This time, things will be different." And each election year, our military personnel, along with millions of veterans, - many disabled and disheartened, have hope.

They want to believe that someone cares, - and often put their faith and their support in the hands of candidates who show an interest in them, in their spouses, in their children. And each election year, once the votes have been counted, the promises are forgotten, and the back burner is revived. And the men and women in and out of uniform turn away in disappointment to wait for the next campaign. Maybe, just maybe, the next candidate will help them. Maybe. Maybe not.

This pattern of neglect is both outrageous and unacceptable. The time has surely come for change, but the road to change is complex. In an attempt to assist in that change, TVNewsLies reached out to grassroots organizations to lend support to the military and to the veterans of our nation. In so doing, we came across a disturbing possibility: *the military and the veterans themselves might be partially responsible for their own quagmire.*

Here is the reality: in this country, two major political parties control the fate of the nation, as well as any legislation that affects the troops or the nation's veterans. Funding for both groups is a response to policy formulated in the White House, and enacted by the Congress. That's the American way. But it is also clouded in myth and political propaganda.

Within the country there is common feeling that the Republican Party “supports the troops,” while the Democrats conspire to close bases and cut military spending. The Republican Party is supposedly “strong on security,” while their counterparts cannot be relied on to lead the nation in times of conflict. Hogwash. Campaign slogans. Drivel.

Both parties engage in sloganeering. Both seek to attack the other. So be it. But so it cannot remain, - because the time has come for the concerns of our military and our veterans to supersede the need to outwit a political opponent. The time has come for the military and our veterans to form a powerful, responsive, UNPREDICTABLE voting block. Neither of the two major parties can be allowed to take the votes of our military, or veterans, or those of their families, friends, or supporters for granted! A vote by anyone concerned for the conditions of our troops and our veterans must be given only to candidates whose promises will be kept. Traditional voting patters have to go!

Military personnel and veterans must provide an incentive for politicians to look out for their best interests. Until now, too many Republican candidates automatically counted on financial support and votes from the families and members of the military community *regardless of promises kept or broken*. That has to end. Democratic candidates, now, will have to understand that they cannot dream of support from the military or from veterans without a new commitment to these voters. The people have the power, and the politicians have to know that it will be used.

Bottom line: Right now, the Republicans take you for granted, and there is nothing in it for the Democrats. A pox on both their proverbial houses. By blindly supporting either party, the military and the veterans have erased the value of their votes. It's a given, and both parties know it. But it's over.

The solution: break tradition. Create an official Military/Veterans Candidate Endorsement Commission. The commission, made up of elected representatives from all interested military and veterans' organizations would RATE CANDIDATES ON THE BASES OF THEIR RECORDS AND COMMITMENTS TO MILITARY/VETERAN ISSUES! The ratings would be supported by statements and records submitted by the candidates and validated by the Commission. Reports about voting records and efforts in office to further military/veterans interests would determine the ongoing ratings of a candidate. The ratings would be available to all voters on an Internet site. Fairly simple, yet totally effective.

During each election cycle, the participating veterans/military organizations would be able to easily identify the local or national candidates who have served them well. They also would be able to identify the candidates who reneged on their promises. The data could be compiled in a *Voter's Guide for the Military, Veterans and their Supporters*. Candidates would be endorsed or not according

to their actions, their commitment, and their sincerity, - and not according to their party.

Democracy is our most cherished asset as Americans. But democracy is based on the premise that the electorate is able to make informed decisions. If we all knew which candidates were truly ready to support issues of importance to the military and to veterans, we would elect candidates on a far more selective basis. No one, surely not the military and the veterans, can afford to vote for anyone who will not work in their best interest. There is too much at stake, and too much to lose.

TvNewsLies would like to offer its guidance and assistance in coordinating a national effort to empower the military/veteran community to once and for all make their votes count.