

JON TESTER

Fighting for Montana's Veterans

Home to nearly 100,000 veterans, Montana has a strong tradition of service in our state, and Jon knows that one of his most important duties in the Senate is to make sure this nation lives up to the promises made to each and every one of our veterans. Jon talks directly to Montana's heroes, and takes their thoughts and concerns with him to Washington – and gets them real results.

Accountability

As a leader of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Jon has fought relentlessly to hold the VA accountable for its failures. He authored and got signed into law the *VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act*, a landmark bill making it easier for the VA to fire and hold accountable bad employees.

He demanded an investigation into wait times for veterans seeking care through VA Montana, and then successfully pressured VA leadership to send an expert team to address the issue. And when the VA didn't pay \$230,000 in backlogged claims to the Billings Mental Health Center, Jon fought back and got them to pay up.

Choice Program

Jon understands the Veterans' Choice program has been a disaster, and has worked tirelessly to hold the VA accountable and fix this broken program. After working across the aisle to pass two fixes to the Choice program, Jon introduced the bipartisan *Caring for Our Veterans Act*, which would scrap the current Choice program and replace it with a more streamlined system focused on getting veterans care in their communities, and personally urged President Trump to support it.

Access to Care

Jon understands that in a rural state like Montana, access to quality care is critical. That's why he's been relentless in his push for more VA facilities, helping secure 9 new veterans clinics, vet centers, or telehealth clinics across Montana, as well as two veterans clinic expansions in Billings and Missoula. He's also been a tireless advocate for building the Butte Veterans Home, and has urged the VA to prioritize it.

Not only that, Jon also got provisions signed into law to increase access to telehealth services for rural veterans and allow the VA to waive copays for veteran telehealth provisions, and authored measures establishing a grant program for Veterans Service Organizations to transport rural veterans to VA facilities.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Daily Inter Lake:

Tester "has been and will continue to be a tireless advocate for veterans' causes."

Missoulian:

Tester is a "listening ear and powerful Congressional advocate" for Montana veterans.

Billings Gazette:

Tester "has made Montana veterans his top priority."

Bozeman Daily Chronicle:

Tester was "doing veterans and all his constituents a favor by showing that compromise is not a dirty word."

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U.S. SENATE

VA Staffing

Jon knows that being able to hire and retain doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals is key to getting our veterans the quality care they've earned, and he's battled relentlessly to ensure the VA has the tools to do so.

He led negotiations on a bipartisan bill that included provisions he authored expanding the VA's ability to more quickly fill positions with a severe shortage of candidates and requiring the VA to create a database of every critical or difficult to fill position, which was signed into law.

Jon has also fought tirelessly to attract medical professionals to the VA, successfully pushing to increase the VA's limit on student loan debt repayments, creating a pilot program to repay student loans for mental health professionals, and backing a proposed VA psychiatric residency program in Montana.

Disabled Veterans

Jon understands the sacred responsibility of caring for the veterans who gave life and limb for their country. That's why his first order of business in the Senate was to secure the first mileage reimbursement increase for disabled veterans in 31 years. And last year, Jon reached across the aisle and got signed into law a measure to streamline the VA's disability appeals process to allow it to better address its ballooning claims backlog.

Mental Health

Jon also knows many veterans return with injuries or scars that can't be seen, and has pushed relentlessly to improve veterans' mental health services. That's why he got signed into law the *Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act*, and backed a measure requiring the VA to more closely track veteran opioid abuse and better train VA employees prescribing them that was signed into law.

Jon has been a steadfast backer of Veterans Treatment Courts across Montana, and introduced legislation to expand access to Veterans Treatment Courts nationwide. And last year, Jon helped bring a clinical study to the University of Montana to test an experimental medicine to treat PTSD among veterans.

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Women Veterans

With fast-growing numbers of women serving in the Armed Forces, Jon has worked tirelessly to ensure the VA does not leave them behind. He introduced the bipartisan *Deborah Sampson Act* to expand VA services for women veterans, and urged the VA to implement reforms like training VA medical staff to better address the needs of women veterans. Jon also backed the *Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act*, which was signed into law.

Business/Education

Jon is committed to ensuring that those who serve our country have the best educational and job opportunities available to them when they leave the military. After working to hold the VA accountable to the promises of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, Jon reached across the aisle to get signed into law the *Forever G.I. Bill*, a major expansion of veteran education benefits.

Not only that, Jon successfully pushed to require the Department of Transportation recognize military truck driving experience for veterans applying for commercial driver's licenses, got signed into law the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act*, which provided tax incentives to hire unemployed veterans, and helped secure a Veterans Business Outreach Center in Billings.

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