

Cut Here

Mark Your Calendar for Town Halls

Highland Village/Copper Canyon

July 17, 2004 • 10:00 a.m.
Highland Village City Hall,
City Council Chambers
1000 Highland Village Road
Highland Village, TX 75077

Eules/Hurst/North Richland Hills/Bedford

July 17, 2004 • 1:00 p.m.
Eules City Hall, City Council
Chambers
201 N. Ector Drive
Eules, TX 76039

Southlake/Keller/Westlake/Colleyville

July 24, 2004 • 10:00 a.m.
Southlake Town Hall, 3rd Floor
1400 Main Street
Southlake, TX 76092

Denton/Argyle

July 24, 2004 • 10:00 a.m.
University of North Texas,
Gateway Center
1st Floor Ballroom #34
801 North Texas Blvd.
Denton, TX 76201

Flower Mound/Double Oak/Bartonville

August 14, 2004 • 10:00 a.m.
Flower Mound Central Fire Station
3838 Forums Drive
Flower Mound, TX 75028

The Colony/Hebron

August 14, 2004 • 1:00 p.m.
The Colony City Hall,
City Council Chambers
6800 Main Street
The Colony, TX 75056

Web: www.house.gov/burgess

Contact Congressman Burgess

Washington Office

1721 Longworth House
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-7772
Fax: (202) 225-2919

Lewisville Office

1660 S. Stemmons Freeway
Suite 230
Lewisville, TX 75067
Phone: (972) 434-9700
Fax: (972) 434-9705

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

This mailing was prepared, published and
mailed at taxpayer expense.
It is provided as a service to 26th
Congressional District constituents.

Veterans Resources

Department of Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov

**Department of Veterans Affairs
General Benefit Information**
1-800-827-1000

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Care Benefits**
1-877-222-8387

**House of Representatives
Committee on Veterans Affairs**
<http://veterans.house.gov>

POW/MIA Information
www.dtic.mil/dpmo

Congressman Michael Burgess and his staff are dedicated to serving the needs of veterans in the 26th Congressional District

Veterans Advocates

Congressman Burgess' district staff is experienced in aiding veterans and other constituents that need help working with federal agencies. If you need help in obtaining your Veterans health benefits or military records, please contact **Constituent Liaison Kim Lopez, Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army Reserves** at (972) 434-9700.

Online Veterans Resources

Congressman Burgess has dedicated a portion of his website to providing resources and updates on Veterans issues. Please visit this site at:
<http://burgess.house.gov/Issues/Issue/?IssueID=250>.



"The stories of our veterans should be preserved for future generations to learn from. These accounts will serve as a valuable record of the price of freedom."

— Congressman Michael C. Burgess



CONGRESSMAN
Michael C. Burgess

2004 Veterans Update

Michael C. Burgess
M.C.
Presorted Standard
CAR-RT SORT

Cut Here

Visit the WWII Memorial in Washington

Washington, DC welcomes the new National World War II Memorial to the National Mall on May 27-30, 2004. Come to Washington and celebrate the opening of the memorial and reunite at this "Tribute to a Generation."

For more information, please call Kim Garza,
Staff Assistant, in my Washington office (202) 225-7772.

Rep. Burgess Fights for Improved Survivor Benefits

On February 4, 2004, Representative Jeff Miller (R-Florida) introduced H.R. 3763, The Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act of 2004, which will eliminate the inequity by increasing the SBP annuity for survivors age 62 and older, through a ten-year plan. The bill restores the benefit-to-premium ratio promised our nation's veterans and would authorize a one-year open season to allow currently un-enrolled retirees to enroll. This will reduce retired pay outlays by increasing deductions of SBP premiums from retired pay, thus offsetting part of the cost of the survivor benefit increase. This plan strikes a reasonable balance between equity and cost considerations, reducing the cost of SBP reform by an estimated \$5.9 billion. In my commitment to help veterans, I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 3763 and will continue to cosponsor other pro-veterans legislation.

"We must honor our commitment to those who have so bravely served our nation. My work in Congress is focused upon ensuring that the men and women who serve in our nation's military are accorded the respect, benefits and services they so richly deserve. I am the proud father of Mike Burgess who is currently serving in the Air National Guard. For those who fight to sustain a strong and prosperous nation, we owe our commitment and continued dedication."

— Congressman Michael C. Burgess

Congressman Michael Burgess speaks at a press conference on Fighting for Survivor Benefit Plans in February 2004.

Burgess Works for Veterans Health Care Needs

In 2003, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation setting record increases in funding for veterans' health care and benefit programs. I voted to pass the Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 Consolidated Omnibus Appropriations bill which included increased appropriations for veterans' medical care totaling \$26.3 billion in FY04, an increase of \$2.4 billion over FY03 funding. Veterans' medical care funding has now increased 24% in the past two years and has risen 53% over five years. Overall veterans' funding rose to \$63.3 billion in FY04, a \$5.6 billion increase compared to FY03.

President George Bush unveiled his FY05 budget on February 2, 2004. The President's budget requested almost \$64.9 billion in budget authority for veterans' benefits and services. The House of Representatives passed its version of the FY05 budget resolution (H.Con.Res. 393) on March 25, 2004, by a vote of 215-212. I voted for the House budget resolution. In the House resolution, total veterans' spending is \$70.5 billion – an increase of 15.3% from last year's total level of \$61.2 billion.

Burgess Votes for Concurrent Receipt Expansions

On October 16, 2003, my congressional colleagues and I announced a House-Senate agreement on an historic plan to provide concurrent receipt for more disabled veterans than has ever been covered by law. I fought for a solution to the concurrent receipt problem which honors our nation's veterans and years of their dedicated service. I was pleased to be able to announce this historic plan which would provide benefits to more disabled veterans than has ever been covered by law before. This solution is fair, responsible, and a huge step forward after years of gridlock on this important issue.

Highlights of the concurrent receipt agreement includes the following:

Blue Ribbon Commission

- ✓ Establishment of a 13-member, bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission to review the current VA disability system and make recommendations to ensure the system adequately compensates veterans for disabilities they may incur as a result of their service.
- ✓ The White House and Congressional leaders will appoint commissioners - more than half of whom will be highly decorated combat veterans.

Purple Heart

- ✓ The House plan continues to provide FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT to ALL PURPLE HEART VETERANS who are retired after 20 years and who have a VA disability rating of 10% - 100%.

Combat-Related Special Compensation

- ✓ Under current law, combat-related special compensation (CRSC) veterans 60% disabled and above have full concurrent receipt through the Republicans' Purple Heart Plus plan for disabilities related to combat situations.
- ✓ The House plan expands FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT to ALL CRSC veterans with a VA disability rating of 10% - 100%.

National Guard and Reservists

- ✓ Very few retired reservists and national guardsmen now qualify under current law for the Purple Heart or CRSC concurrent receipt.
- ✓ The House plan removes this barrier and extends FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT to ALL RETIRED NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS (10 - 100% disabled) who are Purple Heart recipients, or who are CRSC qualified.

Remaining Military Retirees

- ✓ Under current law, none of the remaining military retirees receive concurrent receipt.
- ✓ The House plan establishes FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT to the most disabled military retirees 50% disabled and above (50 - 100% disabled).