

Rep. Don Young's (AK-AL) Dismal Record of Failing our Nation's Troops and Veterans

- *Opposed Bonuses for Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan*
- *Voted Against Giving All Veterans Their Full Disability and Retirement Benefits*
- *Voted to Cut Funding for Veterans by \$6 Billion*
- *Supported GOP Budget that Cut Veterans Funding by \$13.5 Billion*
- *Voted to Cut Veterans' Benefits by \$15 Billion*
- *Opposed Ending the Military Families Tax*
- *Opposed \$53 Million Boost for Veterans Health Care & Benefits*

Opposed Bonuses for Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan

In 2003, Young voted against an amendment to provide \$1,500 bonuses for each service member serving in Iraq and Afghanistan in fiscal 2004.

The measure would have taken \$265 million out of an account paying for Iraqi petroleum imports and put it into a military personnel fund to pay for the bonuses. According to the Congressional Research Service, the energy firm Halliburton could be overcharging the U.S. as much as \$249 million for importing fuel into Iraq. [[New York Times](#), 10/22/03]

The amendment was defeated 213-213. [HR 3289, [Vote #554](#), 10/17/03]

Voted Against Giving All Veterans Their Full Disability and Retirement Benefits

In 2003, Young voted against a motion to allow all veterans to immediately receive full disability and retirement benefits simultaneously. [HR 1588, Vote #616, 11/7/03; [Vote #616](#)]

The motion would have eliminated the ban on concurrent receipt of retirement and disability pay for veterans.

In 2003, the [Macon Telegraph](#) reported,

“The House of Representatives approved a final version of the 2004 Defense Authorization Bill on Friday, but nixed a last-minute effort by U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall to eliminate the ban on concurrent receipt of retirement and disability pay for veterans... Marshall offered a motion shortly before the bill passed which would have forced the House and Senate conference committee to completely lift the ban on concurrent receipt, but that motion failed by a mostly partisan vote of 188-217.” [[Macon Telegraph](#), 11/8/03]

Voted to Cut Funding for Veterans by \$6 Billion

In 2006, Young voted in favor of a \$2.8 trillion budget that was fiscally reckless and harmful for America’s working families. The budget added hundred of billions to the already record budget deficit and includes a provision to increase the debt limit by \$653 billion to \$9.6 trillion.

It cuts key programs like education, health and veterans programs. The budget cuts veterans’ healthcare beyond 2007. Despite an initial boost in veterans’ health spending for 2007, over five years (from 2007-2011), the Republican budget resolution actually cut funding for veterans’ appropriated programs by \$6 billion below the level that CBO estimates is needed to maintain current services.

Additionally, the Republican budget resolution included significant increases in TRICARE costs for military retirees under 65. In fact, healthcare fees will triple for retired officers, double for retired senior enlisted personnel, and increase by 40 percent for junior enlisted retirees. [House Budget Committee, Minority Staff Analysis of the FY 07 Budget]

The budget passed 218-210. [HCR376, [Vote #158](#), 5/18/06]

Supported GOP Budget that Cut Veterans Funding by \$13.5 Billion

In 2005, Young voted in favor of the conference report on the Republican budget plan (HCR 95), which projected \$2.6 trillion in spending and a \$382 billion deficit for fiscal 2006.

The budget cut Medicaid spending by \$10 billion, spent every penny of the Social Security surplus, increased the nation deficit by \$167.5 billion over five years and paved the way for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Furthermore, the conference report cut funding for veterans’ health care by \$13.5 billion over five years. Yet the budget still found room for \$106 billion in tax cuts for those who need it the least. [House Budget Committee Democratic Caucus, “Summary and Analysis of FY 2006 Budget Resolution Conference Report,” 4/28/05]

The measure passed, 214-211. [HCR 95, [Vote #149](#), 4/28/05]

Voted to Cut Veterans’ Benefits by \$15 Billion

In 2003, Young voted for a budget resolution which would have cut veterans’ benefits by \$15 billion over 10 years.

This included cuts to disability benefit payments to former soldiers and reductions in money for GI bill benefits and health care.

The cuts were made in order to make room for President Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy.

The budget passed, 215-212. [CQ Weekly, 7/26/03; Associated Press, 3/24/03; Argus Leader, 3/26/03; HCR 95, [Vote #82](#), 3/21/03]

Opposed Ending the Military Families Tax

In 2006, Young voted against a Democratic motion to the FY 07 Department of Defense Authorization bill that would have ended the Military Families Tax. The Military Families Tax penalizes more than 50,000 survivors in military families, most of whom are widows.

These widows lose their military survivor benefits under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) if they receive VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits because their spouse has died of a service-connected injury. Specifically, the spouse's SBP benefit is reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of the DIC benefit - a \$993 deduction per month.

This harms the 53,000 survivors who continue to pay this unfair tax. [HR 5122, [Vote #144](#), 5/11/06; Leadership document, "Democrats Are Fighting to End the Military Families Tax," 5/11/06]

The motion failed 202-220. [HR5122, [Vote #144](#), 5/11/06]

Opposed \$53 Million Boost for Veterans Health Care & Benefits

In 2005, Young voted against an amendment to the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs funding bill to add \$53 million for veterans' health care and other benefits, offset by a 9 percent cut to BRAC.

The amendment would add \$8 million for combat-related trauma care, \$6 million for poly-trauma centers to support wounded troops once they return to their homes, \$9 million for VA medical and prosthetic research and \$7 million for 100 additional staff who process claims for compensation and pension benefits.

Finally, the amendment would provide \$23 million to help approximately 4,100 spouses of service members with children whose spouse died during the War on Terrorism between September 11, 2001 and November 30, 2004 by making them eligible for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. [Leadership Document, "Medical Quality Democratic Amendment Final."]

The amendment failed 213-214. [HR2528, [Vote #224](#), 5/26/05]