

## **2009 Veterans Day - Video**

Today is a day to voice our respect and admiration for those who have served our great nation. These brave service men and women have fought protect us and the values of life and liberty that we hold so dear. They risked their lives so that all people who seek to live in peace and democracy.

Massachusetts has a proud history of service to the United States of America. During the American Revolution, thousands of men fought with their lives here on Bunker and Breeds hills. The colonists were not expected to fight so hard and so well, and the battle here turned the tide of the war in Massachusetts.

Like those who came before them, today's citizen soldiers of Massachusetts fight with intense bravery to protect rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Today, there are approximately 430,000 veterans living with in our great state. Since September 11, 2001, Massachusetts has seen over 30,000 of its citizens return from active duty. And at this very moment, there are hundreds of Massachusetts men and women in harms way, fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, defending our freedom.

I hold a deep appreciation for [your/ their] service, and recognize the need to provide resources, free of charge, to our veterans.

In 2007, I passed an executive order to create the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services. This council works to review and assess state and federal statutes and programs relating to the delivery of services to veterans, including health care, education, housing, outreach, training and retraining. Over the past couple of years, the Department of Veterans' Services has worked tirelessly in an effort to effectively serve veterans in the Commonwealth. [An example of this is the Statewide Advocacy for Veterans' Empowerment, or SAVE team, which is 24 hour suicide prevention and counseling hotline that makes referrals for substance abuse prevention, housing assistance, veterans' benefits, and more.] Today, I am proud to say that Massachusetts is a leader in veteran's services.

People of Massachusetts, know that you too can make a difference in the lives of veterans. Say you run a small business – take the time to bring veterans under your employment, for meaningful work is one of best ways to help veterans find their footing back here in the commonwealth. Or, you can take the time to volunteer. With the “Give an Hour” program, you can help provide critical mental health services to U.S. troops and their family members.

And to you, the courageous men and women in Massachusetts who have made the choice to fight for our great nation, who responded so bravely to the call to duty. Thank you. We so greatly appreciate the service you have done for us, and recognize the service we must do for you.

If you are veteran, or a family member, in need of any of the services we provide, or if just want to help in making the lives of veterans better, please visit [www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans).

## OTHER STATS/INFO

- Our administration recognizes our great responsibility to the men and women in uniform who have continued a tradition of service that has gone on for decades, and of which we are incredibly proud.
  
- The Commonwealth is a national leader in the services provided for veterans and is continuing its commitment to advancing their opportunities. Every city and town in the state is required by law to have a Veterans Services Officer who is available to meet with all veterans to discuss what opportunities they qualify for. Also, through Chapter 115 Benefits, the Commonwealth provides financial and medical assistance for veterans and their family members. Those eligible receive financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, housing supplies, and medical care
  
- In August 2009, our administration announced that the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services (DVS) was awarded a \$500,000 U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) grant to assist veterans in training and employment in green industry professions, to assist them in finding meaningful work and re-integrating into America's work force. This money can go straight to the hands of those who served us, so that they can more quickly and effectively transition into a self-sufficient life. And that is good for Massachusetts, for our economy.
  
- Monday, September 21, 2009 – Continuing with the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to veterans' affairs and services, today Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray announced the release of \$191,800 from the administration's Environmental bond bill to support maintenance and improvements of the Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans' Memorial.
  
- Wednesday, July 15, 2009 – The Patrick-Murray Administration today announced and unveiled plans for the Commonwealth's official memorial honoring service members who lost their lives in Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF). This will be the first memorial in Massachusetts dedicated to the men and women who lost their lives in the post 9/11 conflicts.  
  
"The brave men and women of Massachusetts who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve our utmost respect, recognition and the ability to live on through this memorial," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray
  
- On this Memorial Day, we also recognize 91 Massachusetts service members who, since September 11, 2001, have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. Together we mourn with their families and their loved ones. We cannot measure the

depth of their loss, nor the true measure of their sorrow. Our debt to them will forever be beyond our power to repay. Yet, we must continue to remember.

- Governor Patrick and I recognize that our veterans have special needs that are a result of the hardship and sacrifices of military service.

- There is terror and tyranny in too many places . . . and the brave men and women of our armed forces remain the steadfast guardians of our freedom.

Like those who came before them, today's citizen soldiers of Massachusetts stand their ground—and when there is no other option, they fight with the intense bravery of a free people who will not give up their God-given rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

- As you know the Governor and I both share our commitment to all veterans and those currently serving. One of Governor Patrick's first actions in early 2007 was issuing an Executive Order to reconvene the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services and appointing me as the chairman. Meeting every 2-3 months, this council has representatives from senior administration officials, veteran services officers, veterans of different conflicts, and support groups.