

Murphy's Effort to Allow Voting at VA Facilities Approved by House

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Last night, legislation pushed by Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to allow nonpartisan organizations to provide voter registration information and assistance at VA facilities passed the House of Representatives.

"We have asked enormous sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, and it is simply unconscionable to deny them the right to participate in a government for which they have so valiantly served and fought for. Veterans want to be able to enjoy the freedoms they worked to defend, and they deserve to be able to do so at VA facilities," said Murphy.

Earlier this summer, the Department of Veterans Affairs adopted a voting assistance policy that had been criticized for not permitting voter registration drives in VA health care facilities. Murphy began his push to stop the VA from implementing its new policy in late July when he announced legislation to fix it. Murphy also successfully pursued passage of an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2009 Military Construction and Veterans Appropriations bill to prevent the VA from spending taxpayer dollars to obstruct voter registration at VA facilities.

After weeks of public pressure, the VA recently rescinded its order to thwart nonpartisan voter registration activities at VA facilities. But Murphy's bill was still necessary to ensure that the VA has a reliable policy of allowing voter registration and assistance efforts at its facilities.

"It's important that veterans, with their unique experience in serving their country, have their voices heard," said Murphy.

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