

Honoring Our Veterans:

This Friday, the nation pauses to pay tribute to our "real heroes," the men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States military.

They number 22 million, of which 405,600 live here in Alabama. They are our family members and friends – grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters, and even sons and daughters. Most are under the age of 65. They have served our nation in times of war and peace, and continue to serve as symbols of patriotism and sacrifice.

They put their lives on the line for freedom and did so without the expectation of fame or fortune. They are the reason we continue to live without fear of tyranny in all its forms. They are America's veterans. They deserve more than a single day of tribute or a few minutes of coverage on the evening news. Above all, they want us to remember that freedom isn't free.

Service Academy Applications due December First:

As a member of Congress, each year I have the distinct privilege of nominating qualified young men and women from Alabama's First District to our United States Service Academies. As the deadline to submit applications is quickly approaching, I want to remind all interested applicants to contact my office as soon as possible.

To receive an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, or the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, you must first be nominated.

My office is currently accepting applications for the class of 2016, whose students will enter the academies in June 2012. The deadline for all applications is December 1, 2011. Students who have an active military parent who has served at least eight years are also eligible to apply to the president's and vice president's offices for a nomination.

Students interested in receiving a congressional nomination should contact my office to receive an application packet. This information is also available under the "Student" section of my website at <http://bonner.house.gov>.

By law, I am permitted to have up to five constituents from the First District at each academy at any given time. In late December, I will review all applicants' information and make nominations. I can nominate up to 10 students for each vacancy to each academy. Once nominations from my office are made, the selection process at each academy begins.

In addition to the basic age requirements, candidates for admission must also display significant degrees of academic achievement (indicated by high school transcripts as well as SAT and/or ACT scores); have exhibited leadership in school, church, or community activities; be of good moral character; and successfully complete a medical review and physical aptitude examination.

Each of these factors is carefully considered by the academies when making their final evaluations to choose those candidates most qualified for the demands of the academies and service as military officers.

Nominees will receive notification of their selection for an appointment between January and May of 2012. If you are not selected by a service academy, you can apply the following year. Anyone between the ages of 17 and 22 on the proposed date of entry may apply for a nomination as long as they are not married or supporting children.

Each of the service academies does an excellent job of preparing students for a challenging future by providing rigorous academic and physical training. If you think you qualify for admission, I encourage you to apply by **December 1, 2011**.

For more information, please contact Ms. Brooks Chew in my district office at 251-690-2811.

It's Only a Test:

If you are watching television or listening to the radio this Wednesday, November 9 at 1PM Central, you may notice an unusually long emergency alert message lasting up to three and a half minutes. During this time, regularly scheduled television, radio, cable and satellite programming will be interrupted. The alert, which is a test of the new national Emergency Alert System, is no cause for alarm.

The new Emergency Alert System is a warning system that can be activated by the White House, if needed, to provide the American people with timely information during national emergencies. The National Weather Service, governors and state and local emergency officials can also use portions of the alert system to issue localized emergency alerts.

While local weather and emergency alerts have been around for decades, the new system expands the scope of the warnings to a national level. Alabama radio and TV stations will participate in the alerts and the public is asked to make note of the alert if they hear it. If you do, remember, it is only a test.

If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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