

Society's Responsibilities for its Veterans

Chlorine Ifill

U.S. veterans have played an important role in making America a great nation. It is only fitting that society should be responsible for giving back to the veterans. Society should provide veterans with medical care, housing assistance, employment assistance, educational assistance, and family services and counseling.

Unfortunately, many veterans come home with a variety of medical issues and complex disabilities. Medical care should include medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, reconstructive surgery, prostheses, and long-term care and disability benefits. War plays havoc on the mind, so veterans should have access to psychological counseling. Many soldiers complain of having debilitating flashbacks and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). War leaves them psychologically and physically hurt, and we should provide them with the best physical and mental health care available.

Many veterans come home to find their dreams are shattered. They have a hard time finding housing, pursuing careers, completing their education, and returning to their families. To support veterans, the government should make reduced loans available so that families can have adequate housing. The government should also provide career training, job placement, and apprenticeships. The government should support employers to help veterans make a smooth transition back to the workplace. Many soldiers did not get to finish college. It is society's responsibility to make sure that these men and women get tuition benefits for themselves and their dependents.

Finally, in order to help veterans, we have to help their families. Many veterans have spouses and children that are affected by the long-term



deployments. Children struggle to stay focused in school and sometimes they do poorly with academics. They know that one or both parents are missing from the home. They might need counseling to help them deal with the separation. The spouse might need therapy because of depression and anxiety. It is hard for veterans to take care of their families because they are at war.

Society should step in and make sure that there are programs to cover the family's needs. These programs might include family counseling, parenting classes, medical coverage, food, legal assistance, day care, and death benefits. The majority of military families are under more stress than the average family because they are constantly in fear that they might get the news that no one wants to hear.

The veterans have kept America safe by fighting for us. We enjoy many privileges because of their sacrifice. Society should be responsible for providing the veterans with adequate programs for medical care; housing, employment, and educational assistance; family services; and psychological counseling. Veterans give to society, and society needs to give back to the veterans.

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READ FURTHER about educational benefits for GI's (p. 43), resources related to PTSD (p. 26), ways to advocate for veterans (p. 3), and Veterans' Victory Farms (p. 42).