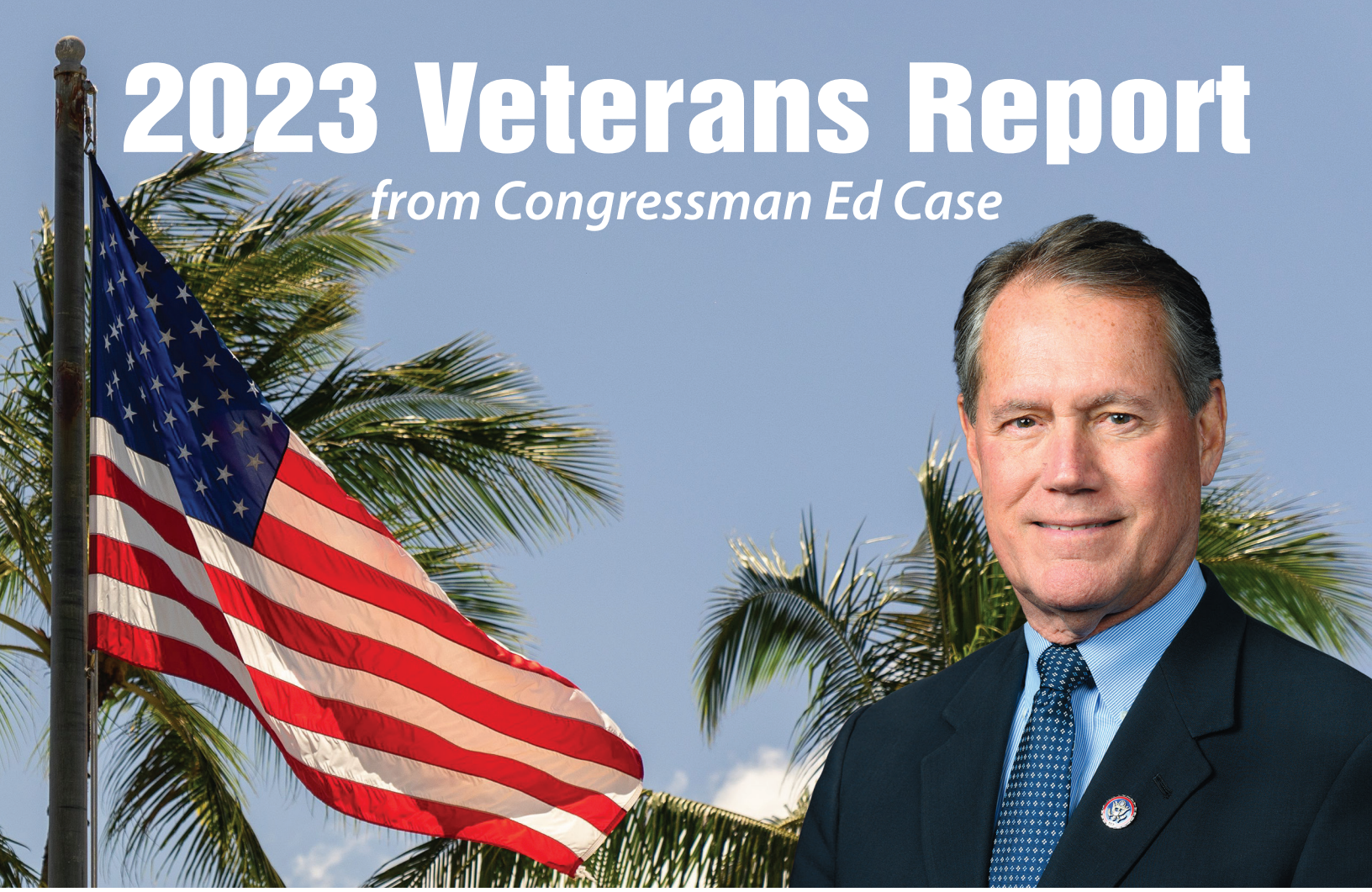


2023 Veterans Report

from Congressman Ed Case



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OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

November 2023 Congressional Report To Hawai'i Veterans

To Hawaii's some 112,000 veterans and your 'ohana, aloha! As we again honor your service on Veterans Day, I report back to you further on some of my activities in Congress on behalf of our nation's veterans and seek your continued guidance.

Assuring Full Funding of Veterans Programs

Our various federal veterans programs, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), can only succeed if fully funded. I focus on full funding mainly through my U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, which is responsible for all annual federal discretionary funding.

We are still considering funding levels for the current fiscal year. However, our House-passed version of the VA appropriations measure allocated almost \$300 billion for the VA. This is in addition to the \$20 billion we earlier included for the Cost of War Toxic Exposure Fund under our PACT Act. Congress also acted to shield veterans benefits from our current budget disputes. Specifically, in late 2022 we provided more than \$150 billion to ensure that vital services for veterans will continue throughout the current fiscal year.

Completing Major New Facilities In Kapolei and Kalaeloa

Two major new veterans facilities toward which I and many others have worked for years are nearing completion in Kapolei and Kalaeloa. The Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home in Kapolei, partially funded through Congressional appropriations, is scheduled to be completed in January 2024. This 120-bed long-term care nursing facility with single-occupancy rooms will be the first state veterans home on O'ahu, a significant advancement considering that over two-thirds of Hawaii's veterans live on O'ahu, most in my district.

Additionally, the long-awaited Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic in Kalaeloa is expected to be completed in January 2024 and fully open in April 2024. This state-of-the-art facility will double the capacity of the VA Pacific



Daniel K. Akaka Clinic in Kalaeloa. Courtesy Henry Villareal



Daniel K. Akaka Veterans Home. Courtesy Bowers and Kubota

Islands Health Care System and will include services such as primary care, mental health, dental care, a pharmacy, an eye clinic and other specialized medical care. The Clinic will also offer dedicated space for VA staff who will handle benefits and will become the new site for the West O'ahu VA Veterans Center as well as for the Hawai'i Office of Veterans Services.

Addressing Veterans Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Another critical area on which my House Appropriations Committee continues to focus is veterans' mental health and suicide prevention. The 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report concluded that over 6,000 veterans were lost to suicide in 2021, 6,000 too many. The report also found that over 60% of veterans who died by suicide were not recent users of VA benefits. Clearly this continues as a real crisis.

I secured language in our FY 2024 bill that directs the VA to include more substantive veterans benefit usage data in its annual report to better identify, study and take action to prevent suicide among our veterans. Additionally, the VA must advise Congress on how best to increase outreach and improve access to mental health care for specific veterans, particularly those in harder-to-reach populations and rural communities. I also worked with my colleagues to secure over \$300 million for the Veterans Crisis Line.

While the measure would fund many critical priorities for our veterans which I fully support, I regrettably had to vote against it overall because it proposes \$1.5 billion in cuts to critical military construction projects, shortchanges dedicated funding for PFAS cleanup, eliminates climate and military base resiliency efforts, rejects important VA infrastructure funding and eliminates diversity advancement initiatives. I am working to improve the bill so that I can support the final version.

Advocating for Our Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Veterans

Our veterans 'ohana is one of the largest percentages of any state both overall and in key diversity areas like women and minority veterans. Over 30% of Hawaii's veterans are Asian Americans, which is more than four times that of any other state, and 7% are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, which is nine times that of any other state. This, like other distinctive qualities of our unique home, sometimes lead to complications in the delivery of services through the VA.

Some key issues on which I have focused for our Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) veterans are full access to VA health care and sufficient burial space. In this 118th Congress, we created and implemented two key entities to better identify, describe and monitor how to best to serve our AANHPI veterans: the Veteran Affairs Advisory Committee on United States Outlying Areas and Freely Associated States; and the Center for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and U.S. Affiliated Pacific Islander Health in Honolulu. I will be following these committees' work with legislative action to implement their recommendations.



With veterans and Gov. Green 2023 Memorial Day

Assisting You and Yours with Your Individual Needs

One of my main responsibilities is assisting you with your own individual needs. This year alone, my office has assisted over 1,000 constituents on their own specific matters, including federal veterans programs, especially health, housing and other benefits and service record-related issues.

If you or a fellow veteran or anyone else you know needs help, please visit my website at <https://case.house.gov/forms/casework> or call my Honolulu office at (808) 650-6688.



Attending Nisei Veterans Ceremony September 2023

Asking for Your Continued Guidance

My efforts in Congress for you and your fellow veterans and 'ohana are only as good as my staying closely connected with you and your organizations, and I need and ask for your kōkua in keeping our connection strong. You can especially help by sharing this newsletter and my offer of assistance with your fellow veterans (you can forward an electronic copy from <https://case.house.gov/newsletters/>)

Please also join me at my **Veterans Congressional Talk Story on Saturday, November 4th, 9-10:30AM Hawai'i time at DAV Hall, Ke'ehi Lagoon**. I'll report to you personally, answer your questions and help you with your concerns. Details below.

Please go to <https://case.house.gov> for further information on my efforts and sign up for regular updates through my e-newsletter and social media at <https://case.house.gov/contact>. We truly welcome your questions and comments on any matter.

It is a deep honor and serious responsibility to represent and serve our Hawai'i's veterans and your 'ohana in Congress, and I humbly thank you again for your service.

Mahalo,

Ed Case

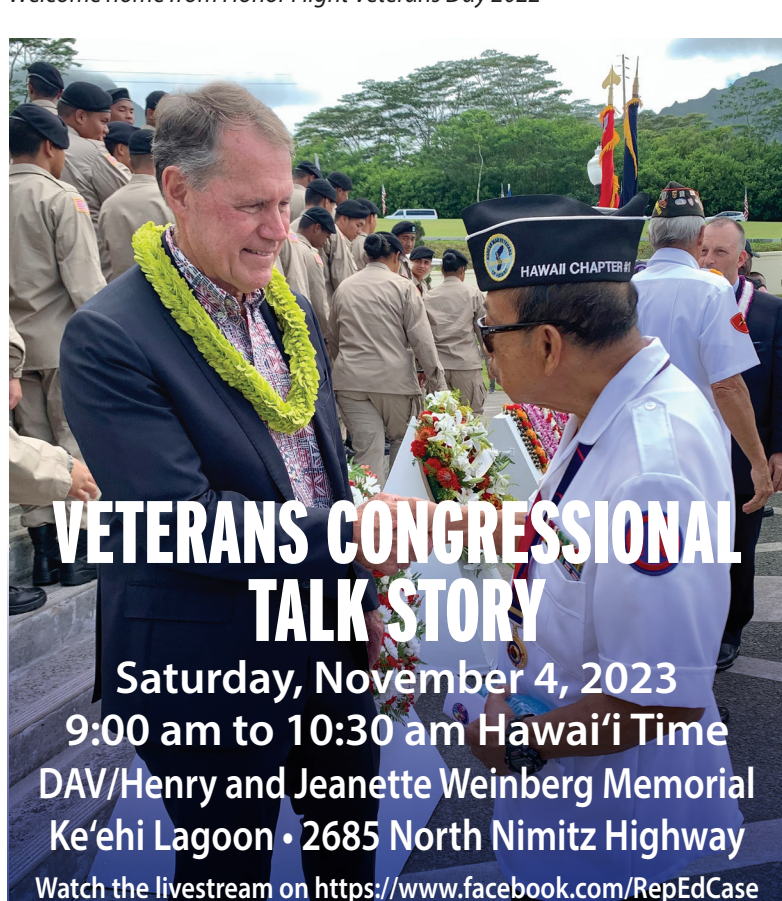
Congressman Ed Case –
Hawai'i-First District

Scan this code to go to my website >

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Welcome home from Honor Flight Veterans Day 2022



VETERANS CONGRESSIONAL TALK STORY
Saturday, November 4, 2023
9:00 am to 10:30 am Hawai'i Time

DAV/Henry and Jeanette Weinberg Memorial
Ke'ehi Lagoon • 2685 North Nimitz Highway

Watch the livestream at <https://www.facebook.com/RepEdCase>

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