



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Cong. Kind Supports Efforts to Improve Veterans Medical Care

*Former UW-Madison Chancellor Donna Shalala to Lead
Presidential Commission on Veterans Medical Care*

Washington, DC – In the wake of disclosures regarding substandard living conditions in some veteran's outpatient facilities, President Bush today named former UW-Madison Chancellor and President Clinton's Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala to lead an investigation of problems at U.S. military and veteran's hospitals along with former U.S. Senator Bob Dole.

This week, both the House and Senate have also held hearings on the mistreatment of returning soldiers at Walter Reed, and President Bush has convened an interagency task force of seven cabinet secretaries, led by Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson, to determine what can be done immediately to improve veterans' care.

Congressman Kind made the following statement:

“Our troops need all the support we can give them on their road to recovery, and what has been happening at the Walter Reed outpatient facilities is unacceptable.

“I have been to Walter Reed Hospital many times to visit wounded soldiers from the third district receiving care there, and by all accounts – the inpatient treatment at Walter Reed is some of the best in the nation. The problems have come after their lives have been saved, while they are still recovering physically and emotionally, and awaiting the next step, be it discharge or redeployment.

“Although I am saddened by the treatment some of our returning troops have received in their living quarters, these disclosures give us an opportunity to conduct a thorough nation-wide review of our veterans' care system. We must work to reduce the backlog of infrastructure improvements, and try to streamline the complex paperwork that so often causes delays.

“I am pleased the House and Senate, and now President Bush, have taken action to right these wrongs, and ensure our returning heroes are getting the highest quality care possible. And President Bush couldn't have appointed a more effective leader than Donna Shalala to head that effort.

“I look forward to hearing their recommendations, and working with this Administration to quickly fix these problems. After putting their lives on the line, our troops deserve nothing but the very best.”