

April 23, 2010

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ben Ray Luján welcomed home the New Mexico National Guard 1115th Transportation Company at a ceremony in Taos. Earlier this week, Rep. Luján joined his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass a legislative package that will help ensure that veterans and their families get the care and support they need and deserve. The Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act will reform and improve veterans' health services by providing support for disabled veterans and their families who act as caregivers, expanding mental health services, ending copayments for those who are catastrophically disabled, and increasing access to health care for veterans in rural areas. The legislation will now return to the Senate for final approval.

“Our troops have served our country bravely at a very difficult time,” said Rep. Luján. “It is an honor to welcome them home, and it is fitting that we passed important legislation just this week in the House of Representatives that will help our veterans. The sacrifices our troops and their families have made will not be forgotten, and I will keep fighting to make sure veterans get the services they have earned and deserve.”

On Wednesday, the House passed the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, which will provide support for disabled veterans and their families who act as caregivers, expand mental health services, and end copayments for those who are catastrophically disabled. The legislation includes an important provision for New Mexico by expanding transportation for veterans to local VA hospitals and clinics through VA grants to local Veterans Service Organizations. This will help rural veterans get access to VA hospitals and clinics.

“This legislation takes a historic step to provide comprehensive and valuable services to our veterans, especially rural veterans who often have difficulty reaching clinics or hospitals,” said Rep. Luján. “I’m encouraged by the passage of this legislation, and I’ll keep standing up for our veterans.”