

Members Urge Congress to Take up Bipartisan Bill to Improve, Expand Assessments

Washington, DC – A recent [investigation](#) into undiagnosed brain injuries in troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan highlights the need to approve legislation that would improve and expand screenings for returning service members, U.S. Reps. Tom Rooney (R-FL) and Michael E. McMahon (D-NY) said today.

“Brain injuries are difficult to detect, but the effects can be devastating,” Rooney said. “We need to make sure that we are giving our military medical system the tools and resources it needs to screen for and diagnose head injuries, so that our returning troops can get the care they need.”

“We have long been advocating for the treatment of our service men and women’s physical and invisible wounds after they return from combat, but obtaining the proper diagnosis is just as important, if not more so,” said McMahon. “The Department of Defense must use the increased funding that Tom and I secured in last year’s budget to find concrete technologies and methods that work. This is a massive problem in an armed forces. It’s time to move beyond the pilot program and begin combating the real issue.”

According to the report completed by National Public Radio and ProPublica, military screening systems routinely miss traumatic brain injuries in troops. About 40 percent of concussions go undiagnosed using one screening test, and another test has proven to be “as reliable as a coin flip.”

Traumatic brain injury, which results from shock waves from roadside bombs, has proven to be one of the wars’ signature wounds. When affected soldiers go untreated, they suffer from lingering health problems, including difficulties with memory, concentration and mental focus.

Bipartisan legislation introduced by Reps. McMahon and Rooney, the [Veterans Mental Health Screening and Assessment Act \(H.R. 1308\)](#), would address this concern by requiring returning service members to participate in confidential one-to-one screenings with licensed mental health professionals.

“Our troops and veterans deserve action to improve screening and detection of traumatic brain injuries,” Rooney and McMahon said. “We hope the House of Representatives will move quickly to take up and pass this critical legislation.”

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