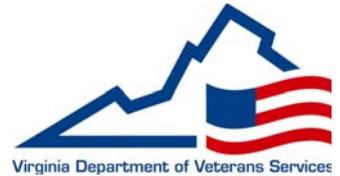


The Virginia Department of Veterans Services



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News Release

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VA Assistant Secretary Tammy Duckworth to address Virginia Wounded Warrior Program Conference

RICHMOND— L. Tammy Duckworth, Assistant Secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will serve as keynote speaker at the *Virginia is for Heroes 2010 Conference* scheduled for Thursday, February 18 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. Appointed by President Barack Obama, Duckworth serves as chief spokesperson for VA and directs public affairs and intergovernmental efforts. She also oversees programs for homeless veterans and consumer affairs.

“The transition home for our service members is not easy – and it is especially difficult for those who return with physical or mental wounds,” said Assistant Secretary Duckworth. “But we as a nation must work to make their transition home as easy and seamless as possible. Our veterans served us when this country called. Now it is our job to serve them.”

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is sponsoring the event that expects to attract more than 400 veterans and service providers from across the Commonwealth. The VWWP coordinates services and support across the Commonwealth for veterans, National Guard and Reservists not in active federal service, and their families to address combat/operational stress and traumatic brain injuries. The conference will highlight national, state and regional efforts to coordinate services and to reach out to veterans and families to assist with support from their communities before and after deployment. The conference agenda can be viewed at www.virginiaforveterans.com.

“It is an honor to have Tammy Duckworth join us for the conference,” said DVS Commissioner Vince Burgess. “I have great respect for her exemplary service to her country and have enjoyed working with her in her previous position as Commissioner of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs.”

Serving those who served.

“Assistant Secretary Duckworth is a remarkable American who represents our resilient military men and women who, with the right care and treatment, successfully deal with the effects of both the physical and psychological wounds from war,” said Catherine Wilson, Executive Director of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program. “Her personal and professional experiences are unparalleled for understanding and addressing the needs of returning service members, veterans and their families.”

A Major in the Illinois Army National Guard, Duckworth served in Iraq as an Assistant Operations Officer and also flew combat missions as a Black Hawk helicopter pilot. During a mission north of Baghdad in 2004, her aircraft was ambushed and a rocket-propelled grenade struck the helicopter she was co-piloting. She continued to attempt to pilot the aircraft until passing out from blood loss. As a result of the attack, Duckworth lost both of her legs and partial use of one arm.

Since her recovery at Walter Reed, Duckworth has dedicated her life to public service, advocating on behalf of disability rights and veterans.

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