

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR OLYMPIA SNOWE
ON THE LINCOLN-SNOWE “WOUNDED WARRIORS”
AMENDMENT
January 29, 2007**

Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley and my colleagues here on the Finance Committee, I am pleased that you have supported the inclusion of this critical amendment into the Chairman’s modification, in order to prevent a grave injustice from taking place.

While the majority of experts agree that tax rebates are one of the quickest and most effective ways to spur consumption, and hence stimulate our economy, the subject does not come without its share of controversy. Key questions immediately arise, such as how large the checks should be and what segments of our population should receive them. While considering these factors, it was brought to my attention that our nation’s service disabled veterans, numbering over six million, may be precluded from obtaining the benefits of this proposal because their disability payments are non-taxable. Upon learning of this, I was honored to join Senator Lincoln in offering an amendment to address this issue.

Let us be clear on this point – our nation’s disabled veterans are in no way less deserving than others who will receive rebate checks. Furthermore, veterans are equally likely to bolster our economy through spending.

In recent decades, our nation has greatly progressed in terms of how we treat veterans upon returning from combat. Despite differing opinions on war, the American public has grown to understand that our country's veterans should be revered with the highest level of respect for their selfless service. In fact, less than forty-eight hours ago, our nation's leaders, including those from both sides of the aisle, sat intently in the House Chamber as the President presented the State of the Union. During his speech, President Bush pronounced, "Some of our servicemen and women have survived terrible injuries, and this grateful country will do everything we can to help them recover." Upon hearing this, the room erupted in applause. Now, we stand resolute in ensuring that neither the words, nor the response, were hollow.

The Army Rangers have a creed that many have heard, but few will ever fully comprehend. That creed contains these four simple words: "Leave no man behind." I thank my colleagues for supporting this amendment, ensuring that we in Congress do not violate this creed ourselves, leaving our nation's disabled heroes out of this economic stimulus package.

Thank you.