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## *House of Representatives*

HON. BILL SALI  
OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2008

### OPERATION EDUCATION

Madam Speaker, over 1,668,000 soldiers have been deployed in the service of our Nation in Afghanistan and Iraq since September 11. These veterans sacrificed every day for the well-being of our Nation. Whether they have seen active combat or not, all veterans share a common readiness to commit their all to the defense of the land they love. Their willingness to freely sacrifice their lives epitomizes what makes our country great. As a nation, we will always owe them a great debt.

Several months ago I attended a funeral at Arlington Cemetery. That day a 19-year-old soldier from Pennsylvania was laid to rest. He was in a Bradley fighting vehicle in Iraq when an insurgent threw a grenade down the turret.

It was reported that this soldier had time to get out of the vehicle before the grenade went off, and that is what he had been trained to do. Instead, he wrapped his body around the grenade as it went off, saving the lives of three other crew members.

In the Book of John 15:13 Jesus taught, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." The young man laid to rest at Arlington that day lived an example of the love of Christ. He and countless other who had lived stories of bravery and heroism deserve our highest honor and praise. But so do all of our veterans.

That is why I was happy to recently see some developments back in my home State of Idaho that will greatly benefit the wounded warriors in my district. Through the hard work of many, including Karen White, the University of Idaho, located in Moscow, Idaho, recently launched a program known as Operation Education. The purpose of this program is to help veterans "severely and permanently wounded" as a result of their service to our Nation since September 11. Through the Operation Education Scholarship, the University of Idaho is able to offer financial support in areas from

tuition and books to transportation and child care. They also offer internships and assist in job placement.

Education is one of the greatest commodities we can offer our Nation's veterans. The skills they have learned in the Armed Forces inevitably benefit them as they go on to future learning and higher education. Operation Education and other programs like it offer veterans the opportunity to continue pursuing their dreams and benefiting themselves, their families, and our Nation.

Not only is Operation Education open to disabled veterans, it is also available for the spouses of those veterans. Spouses of our soldiers are sometimes overlooked when we talk about the sacrifices that are made for our Nation. Those who stay at home while their spouses serve in faraway lands can sometimes do no more than pray and hope, trusting the fate of their loved ones to a higher power.

I am familiar with the experience of a young couple split up less than five months after being married when this young man was called to go to Iraq to train canines for the next nine months. Not only is that young Marine separated from his brand new bride, he will miss the birth of their baby in six months. He and his wife moved just weeks before he was called to Iraq, and she is left at home in a new area faced with the prospect of delivering her first child on her own. Neither this proud soldier nor his brave wife are unique in their situation, and other young military families have faced more dire circumstances. However, their situation epitomizes the sacrifices that our military families make--both those who serve in uniform abroad and those who serve less visibly in the home.

I honor those whose service in defending our Nation has required their lives. I have learned that it is the calling of some in our Nation's military to not come home. However, for those who do come home, the least we can do to show our respect for their service is to provide them with the opportunities they deserve. I commend the University of Idaho for making this program available, and I look forward to future developments that will bless the lives of our Nation's veterans.