

Rep. Smizik's Speech at Brookline's November 2007  
Veterans Day Ceremony

Before I read the Governor's Proclamation, I would like to share with you, as I usually do, my thoughts on this Veterans Day.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month we honor our men and women in uniform who have their country bravely and have sacrificed so much and sometimes tragically their lives. We not only honor their memory, but their families who have suffered a loss. Even if the soldiers survive the conflict their families suffer because they are deprived of the presence of these men and women for so many months at a time. Spouses suffer, and children suffer because both the parents aren't present during their childhood. Families are fragile and many are broken up because of these absences. Sometimes tragically these soldiers return with injuries leaving them disabled...physically or mentally. Sometimes they have no families to return to and face problems of transition. Often, they are unable to get employment because of their disabilities such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. As a result, they become homeless. There are not adequate programs for these troubled soldiers.

While some return with no problems if they qualify they are given preferences to be police officers and firefighters under civil service. Some get scholarships for school. These are costs that a society must and should pay to those who have sacrificed so much.

My major point on this Veterans Day is that we must never forget the soldiers' bravery and sacrifice. However, our leaders must not ever forget the cost to the individual soldier, his or her family and community and even the country's financial cost of fighting a war. Even though the world appears to be crazier and more scary than ever, the decision to go to war must not be made lightly. The best thing we can do for the men and women who fight on the front is to have them serve in times of peace. War is a time when heroes are made, but leaders who avoid wars can be heroes also. The two Wars that have been fought during

**my adulthood have caused tremendous tolls in terms of lives lost, families and communities damaged, as well as damage to our country's reputation. The financial cost of WAR has created havoc with our economy. With my words today I don't mean to diminish the soldiers. With all the stories in the newspapers and on radio and TV concerning the suffering faced by returning soldiers and their families these past weeks, I felt I wanted to remember that this day used to be called Armistice Day...a day to lay down our arms and talk peace.**