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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 28, 2010

The Honorable Eric. K. Shinseki  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20501

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to request that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) include information about government programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in its *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* publication. I applaud VA for putting information about the EITC on its website.

Congress passed a two year extension of the EITC in December, 2010, to help alleviate the financial burden faced by many low-to-moderate income families. The EITC provides qualifying low-to-moderate income working families with a tax credit of 40 percent for the family's first \$12,750 of income. However, its purpose won't be served unless qualifying families are made aware of the EITC and include the exemption when filing their tax returns.

Many veterans rely heavily on the *Federal Benefits* publication, which is a testament to the quality of work produced by the VA. However, without including information on non-veteran specific government benefits like the EITC or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps individuals and families pay their energy bills, some veterans and those who assist veterans could overlook benefit programs available to all Americans. Notifying veterans of the EITC opportunity is not only the right thing to do, it may help you in your efforts to end homelessness among Veterans and their families by helping low-income veterans and their families keep more of what they've earned.

As the Senate and the Department of Veterans Affairs work together to enhance the services, healthcare, and opportunities available to our nation's veterans, we must duly ensure that veterans are aware of existing benefits. Since families can already begin e-filing tax returns, it is critical that our veteran families are notified of this opportunity as soon as possible.

I appreciate your consideration of my proposal to include information on the EITC in the *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* publication and to increase VA outreach efforts for these types of government programs.

Thank you for your continued service to our nation and its veterans.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator