

President Lincoln – in his [Second Inaugural Address](#) , with the Civil War nearing an end – promised “to care for him who shall have borne the battle.” As we observe Veterans Day this year, such a commitment to our women and men in uniform is one of our [greatest priorities](#)

On Thursday, I participated in Veterans Day observances in East Brunswick, Holmdel, and Lawrenceville, speaking about how we can best support those who serve, ensuring that they have the [education benefits](#) , job opportunities, and health care they need to live the best life possible.

A consistent concern I hear from veterans is that the VA is too slow responding to their needs. I’ve supported efforts to ensure that the VA has the resources and staff needed to improve significantly its responsiveness. On Wednesday I joined Monmouth Freeholder Amy Mallett and Greg Bean, the father of [fallen soldier Coleman Bean](#) , for the opening of the [Monmouth County Veteran Services Office](#)

. Veteran services officers will help local veterans get their claims processed faster by the VA. This is a welcome addition to the services available to veterans in Central New Jersey.

Supporting Seniors

Last month, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced there will be no automatic [Cost-of-Living Adjustment \(COLA\)](#) for 2011, as there was none in 2010. I do not support this. The COLA is calculated automatically using data on inflation published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and is not a deliberate decision by Congress.

In light of the SSA announcement, I support passing a [one-time \\$250 payment](#) for seniors and other retirees, like the \$250 payment to seniors included in the Recovery Act (also known as the Stimulus Bill) last year. The legislation I support is fully paid for and it would help seniors make ends meet.

Providing a \$250 payment is one step we should take. I also support a fairer cost-of-living calculation for Social Security in order to keep pace with the actual increases in the true cost of living for seniors. The current formula does not serve seniors well.

Recognizing National Adoption Month

In November, families across the nation are celebrating [National Adoption Month](#) . This month is dedicated to raising awareness about all types of adoption, with a special focus on the 115,000 children and youths waiting to be taken out of the foster care system.

I often meet with adopted children or their parents to understand their concerns. I'm working to improve the adoption system by helping to encourage the adoption of older children within the foster care system.

Click [here](#) to learn more about New Jersey's own adoption and foster care programs and [here](#) to learn about Adoption Month events near you, including celebrations on November 20 when thousands of adoptions will be finalized across the country.