

Friends,

It was the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, 1918, when the Allied Forces and Central Powers laid down their arms to formalize the end of the First World War. One year later, in 1919, the United States observed the first Armistice Day to remember the Americans who fought and died in the muddy trenches of Europe. In the 100 years since, we have come to recognize November 11th as Veterans Day – a day to pay tribute to American veterans of all wars who have bravely stood up in defense of liberty and democracy – from Bunker Hill to Baghdad.

On this Veterans Day, it is my privilege to thank all the men and women who answered the call to serve in defense of our nation. These patriots and their devoted families represent the best of America. Today, we acknowledge not only what they have done to keep us safe, but also what they have done to inspire future generations. For years to come, young Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen will endeavor to emulate their hard work, integrity, and commitment to our country and its citizens.

In Maine, we are proud that so many of our neighbors and friends answered the call to serve our nation – indeed, over ten percent of Maine citizens are veterans. When they return home to civilian life, these men and women form the backbone of our communities: they are teachers, first responders, business owners, and mentors. They are people bound together by an ethic of service, dedicated to furthering the American experiment and fostering a more free and just America.

But Veterans Day should not just be a day of gratitude and remembrance. It should also be a day to reaffirm our commitment to care for those who have fought on our behalf. All across America, too many veterans are left struggling with homelessness, mental health, unemployment, and a lack of access to healthcare. So today, let us both celebrate America's veterans and rededicate ourselves to President Lincoln's promise, "[t]o care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."

Sincerely,

ANGUS S. KING, JR.

United States Senator