

### Memorial Day Reflection

by Congressman Kevin McCarthy

While Memorial Day weekend may mark the beginning of summer and a long weekend away from work, it has even greater importance that we should all take time to reflect on. It marks a day of remembrance; it is one of the few times during the year when Americans come together to recognize and honor the men and women of our Armed Services who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country. On this Memorial Day, whether you observe a moment of silence or attend a tribute to honor our veterans' sacrifices, I ask that you never forget those who selflessly made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom and way of life.

The basis of our nation's independence was founded in the ideals of freedom and liberty. When freedom and liberty were under siege, from the early battles of the Revolutionary War to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, our servicemen and women courageously heeded the call to defend our values and freedoms by liberating the oppressed, encouraging the peace, and unselfishly promoting the courage and convictions that have made our republic the shining beacon of democracy across the world. The 22nd Congressional district is unique in that it is home to so many of those who defend our freedom on a daily basis. In the east, we have China Lake Naval Air Warfare Weapons Center Weapons Division and Edwards Air Force Base, and in the west we have Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo. I am grateful to all the men and women who serve our country at these facilities.

This Sunday, in remembrance of some of our own local heroes, I will be joining Steve Muro, the acting Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs, at the inaugural Memorial Day Ceremony at the Bakersfield National Cemetery. This cemetery opened last July and it stands today as a monument not only to the sacrifice of our local veterans, but also to our communities' unending commitment to those who serve. On Memorial Day, I hope you will join many of your neighbors at various Memorial Day ceremonies in our local communities to honor our fallen service men and women.

Our freedom is based on the extraordinary acts of heroism and courage by ordinary Americans who loved this country so much, they were willing to die for her. So the next time we see a soldier in uniform or a veteran who served, let them know how grateful we are that they

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volunteered to defend our freedom. May we never forget these individuals' service and sacrifice for us and our country.