

Akaka Receives VFW Congressional Award

Mar 17, 2009

Washington — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. presented its 2009 Congressional Award to Sen. Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) for his outstanding service to national defense, homeland security, and to veterans, service members and their families.

"This award is extremely important to the VFW," said National Commander Glen M. Gardner Jr., a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas, "because it recognizes a champion in Congress who continues to fight for a strong and secure America, and for those who have worn the uniform."

The VFW Congressional Award has been presented annually since 1964 to one member of the House or Senate for significant legislative contributions on behalf of veterans and military service personnel. Past recipients include strong national security and veterans' advocates, such as Mississippi's Sen. John Stennis (D) and Rep. "Sonny" Montgomery (D), and South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond (R), among many others. Last year's award went to Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas).

Akaka, a World War II veteran of the Army Corps of Engineers, has been a staunch supporter of veterans, service members and their families throughout his seven terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and now four terms in the U.S. Senate

The senator is the chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and a senior member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and the Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness and Management. A tirelessly supporter of servicemen and women and their families, he played a pivotal role in ensuring the new 21st Century GI Bill became law, and is responsible for major increases in VA funding, as well as marshaling through a large array of bills to improve veterans programs, benefits and entitlements. He was also instrumental in defeating recent proposals that would have restricted a veteran's ability to receive VA compensation for service-related injuries.

"Our military, our veterans, and our families of past and present have no better friend in Congress than Senator Akaka," said Gardner. "I am honored to present the prestigious VFW national award to him."

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Akaka is the second U.S. senator from Hawaii to receive the VFW Congressional Award. Fellow Sen. Daniel K. Inouye received his in 1987.