

This is Congressman Peter Roskam. This is the first in a series of video newsletters I will be sending out.

Email technology allows us to communicate while saving taxpayer dollars on stationary and postage.

This system works both ways and I hope you use email to communicate your thoughts, views and questions to me.

Today I want to talk about a recent trip I took to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Every day, soldiers from Illinois – and every state in the union – are risking their lives protect America and spread Democracy across the globe.

Some have fallen and some were injured.

These wounded soldiers deserve our best medical treatment.

As such, I was deeply concerned when I heard stories of the poor conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I wanted to see it myself.

While I found the staff at Walter Reed to be well-trained and highly motivated, some of the facilities were run down – they seemed downright shabby.

A recovering soldier I talked to spoke of a complicated and exhausting bureaucracy he had to endure to get insurance

coverage or to justify even the most basic medical procedure.

The soldiers at Walter Reed have, at the very least, spent months in a war zone and have endured a debilitating injury. Adding to their stress level through needless bureaucracy is no way to welcome them home.

Clearly, there was a failure in the chain of command, and I'm encouraged by the recent change in leadership at Walter Reed.

I think the message to the new leadership is clear: You are going to be held accountable for the care we are offering our men and women returning from battle.

Congress is watching. America is watching.

Only a small number of soldiers from our Sixth District have received care at Walter Reed. Many soldiers from Chicagoland receive care at one of several local facilities.

My next step as the Congressional advocate for veterans in the Sixth District is to visit these facilities to make sure that the conditions, procedures, doctors and staff meet the needs and surpass the expectations of our fallen soldiers.

I'm also reaching out to returning veterans through the Veterans Administration and local veterans organizations to hear their stories, honor their service and make sure they have what they need to re-integrate into American society.

Our soldiers are duty bound to defend America and protect our families. I'm proud to say it is my duty to protect our veterans.