

Rick Mantei and Vietnam Veteran Gary McCracken Meet with Congressman Joe Wilson to Address VA Benefits Case

Rick Mantei and Vietnam veteran Gary McCracken recently met with Congressman Joe Wilson to advocate for long-overdue VA benefits and recognition.

COLUMBIA, SC, UNITED STATES, November 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a continued effort to support those who have served our nation, [Rick Mantei](#) recently accompanied Vietnam-era veteran Gary McCracken to meet with [Congressman Joe Wilson](#). The meeting represents a significant step forward in Gary's long battle to receive the veterans' benefits and recognition he has sought for decades.

Gary McCracken, who was medically discharged from the military in 1970 after sustaining a severe head injury during service, has struggled for years with the lasting effects of that trauma. Initially reported as an accident involving a metal pipe, the truth later emerged: Gary was struck by a fellow soldier wielding a cast and was subsequently threatened into silence. The incident left him with lasting injuries and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) - conditions that have gone unacknowledged by the VA for far too long.

Determined to bring justice to his case, Rick Mantei arranged for a private medical evaluation confirming Gary's PTSD diagnosis. Since then, he has worked tirelessly alongside organizations including the VA, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the American Legion, building awareness and advocating for Gary's rightful benefits.

"Gary's story is heartbreaking but not uncommon," said Rick Mantei. "Many veterans carry the physical and emotional scars of service while fighting systems that should be fighting for them. I'm committed to making sure Gary's voice is heard and that he receives the recognition he deserves."



The meeting with Congressman Wilson marks another step in their ongoing mission to bring visibility, accountability, and compassion to the treatment of veterans like Gary McCracken.

Through efforts like these, [The Rick Mantei Charitable Fund](#) continues to fulfill its mission of honoring veterans, preserving their stories, and advocating for their well-being long after their service has ended.

About The Rick Mantei Charitable Fund

The Rick Mantei Charitable Fund organizes aviation-themed fundraising events and veteran outreach initiatives throughout the Southeast. The Fund is dedicated to preserving aviation history, honoring service members, and supporting causes that strengthen communities and uplift those who have served.

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Rick Mantei

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The Rick Mantei Charitable Fund

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