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**PATRICK TESTIN**  
STATE SENATOR

Op-Ed: Thank You, Veterans

November 11<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day. There is no statement – nothing I can say or write – that speaks louder or more powerfully than the oath taken by the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. Those that take the oath of enlistment aren't just making a statement with their lips; they're making a statement with their lives. So we ask ourselves – how can we express our gratitude when a simple “thank you for your service” seems inadequate?

Instead of saying thank you once a year, we must live lives of gratitude and action. Our veterans didn't put their lives on hold and risk everything for personal gain; they did it to protect the American idea – that we are all entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That idea is what makes America unique. We aren't held together by a common ethnic origin or an accident of geography – we're bound together by a shared vision. Our veterans have protected our core values from enemies abroad. We owe it to them to preserve our liberties and our access to equal opportunity by standing against division, prejudice, and the apathy that can arise from being as blessed as we have been. In short, we owe it to our veterans to be the best citizens we can be.

And, while our thanks may seem inadequate, it is still important to demonstrate gratitude. This Veterans Day, I thank those who have served and their families for the sacrifices that they have made.