

# Leading the Charge: Sen. Jim Inhofe

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Sen. Inhofe has a long history of public service, including service in the U.S. Army and representing Oklahoma in the Senate since 1994. He became Senate Armed Services Committee chairman in September 2018.

ADC: As chairman, you have the unique opportunity to engage with service members and their families across the world. From these interactions, what do you see as the biggest challenge to the quality of life for our military families?

Inhofe: Military families face many challenges—access to child care, military spouse employment and access to health care, to name a few. They face these challenges, in most cases, far away from their families back home. Too often, families feel isolated and unsure of where to turn when they have a problem. That is why it is so important for Congress to support military families by providing the best quality of life programs available. I am committed to continuing the commissary and exchange benefit, expanding child care availability on military installations, breaking down barriers to spouse employment and ensuring that families can get the right health care at the right time in the right place. I think you can see that in the work we are doing on the Senate Armed Services Committee. We ask so much of our military families—namely, constant relocations to faraway places and long absences from their loved ones. We need to show our gratitude for their service to the nation by making their lives better everywhere they serve.



*(Above) Sen. Inhofe greets veterans from the Oklahoma Honor Flight during their visit to Washington in April 2017. Photo submitted by the Office of Senator Jim Inhofe.*

ADC: What are your three priorities as it relates to military family quality of life?

Inhofe: You recruit the service member, but you retain the family. My priorities all come back to making sure military families know that they have an advocate in Congress for any issues they may face. Right now, I am leading the charge to improve the privatized military housing initiatives. We are taking a deep look into what happened that allowed conditions to deteriorate and how we can move forward to ensure military families live in safe, high-quality housing. In the next few months, I will also be working on cutting down the barriers for military spouse employment by advancing legislation to reduce the burden on military spouses when they must transfer a professional license or credential each time they move to another state. States across the country have varying requirements and tests for licensure, making it even more challenging for military spouses to find meaningful employment after relocation. Finally, I will continue my commitment to protecting and improving benefits for military families, specifically the commissary benefit and timely access to health care, and eventually helping them seamlessly transition into civilian life.

ADC: Quality of life for military families depends on the collaboration of state and local government and a variety of community organizations. Are there programs or organizations that serve as good examples of how collaboration can support military family quality of life?

Inhofe: Oklahoma is truly unique because we are one of the most military friendly states in the country. I attribute that to efforts from state and local government, as well as the private sector, to be welcoming and supportive of the families that support our five military installations. I see our integration of community resources as a model for other states to promote a supportive environment for our military families.

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