Written by U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar
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As we gather with family and friends this year to enjoy the holiday season and the New Year and give thanks for our many blessings, there's no better time to remember our men and women in uniform who have given our country the gift of freedom and liberty for generations.

This year over 62,000 American veterans will spend the holidays without a place to call home. That is 62,000 too many.

But it's also far fewer than past years. In December, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a report stating that the number of homeless veterans in the U.S. dropped by seven percent in 2012. That is no small number.

And while we know our work does not end until every veteran has a place to sleep at night, we also know that our efforts are working—that our promise to give these men and women the resources and support they need when they come home is closer to being fulfilled.

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) made a commitment to address homelessness among veterans and set a goal to end it by 2015. Along with this goal came the 2010 signing of the Honoring American Veterans Act, legislation that provides a comprehensive package of benefits to veterans.

Earlier this year, I passed legislation to help us get closer to that goal. The Helping Our Homeless Veterans Act improves homeless services for rural and underserved urban veterans.

Specifically, it strengthens a program that provides chronically homeless veterans with housing vouchers and case management services, such as access to counseling and job training.

Before this legislation was passed, housing vouchers and accompanying service programs could only be distributed by VA medical centers located in the Twin Cities and regional population centers.

This meant that a veteran living in a rural community like Fairmont or International Falls might have trouble accessing critical resources.

Now the VA can consult with community providers and collaborate with local groups and organizations to ensure that veterans in every community across the state can get the support they need and deserve.

While this marks significant progress, we know that there is still much more work to be done.

In Minnesota, studies show that on any given night more than 300 individuals who previously served in the military are homeless.

But we are taking important steps toward making sure that we can reach every one of these 300 veterans so that no veteran falls through the cracks, no matter where they live.

Because while we know that we can never truly repay the debt we owe our brave troops and

veterans, we also know that we can honor them with our actions. As we reflect on the past year and set our goals for the new one, we are heartened by the fact that these actions are working.

As we make our resolutions for the New Year, let us not forget one resolution we must keep: may we never rest until the heroes who have sacrificed for our country have a place to call home during the holidays and every day in between.