



English

Other NewsBank Products

[Search History](#) [Saved Articles](#)
Search Results for **schmidt walter reed** in All Text

Ohio Newspapers

[Edit Search](#) | [New Search](#)
[Show Help](#) ▼

[Back To Results](#)
[Previous](#) Article 5 of 6 [Next](#)
Save this Article 

## Hospital not that bad, Schmidt says

Cincinnati Enquirer, The (OH) - March 21, 2007

*Author: Malia Rulon [mrulon@gns.gannett.com](mailto:mrulon@gns.gannett.com) and Howard Wilkinson [hwilkinson@enquirer.com](mailto:hwilkinson@enquirer.com)*

Calls **Walter Reed** story 'overblown'

WASHINGTON - Rep. Jean **Schmidt** wrote in her weekly column on her Web site Monday that media reports about living conditions at **Walter Reed** Army Medical Center, one of the nation's main facilities for treating veterans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, were "overblown."

**Schmidt**, a Miami Township Republican, said she recently visited the Washington, D.C., hospital to investigate a Feb. 18 Washington Post story that detailed neglect and dilapidated living conditions.

"While I found the situation at **Walter Reed** to be overblown by both politicians and the media, I hope that future accounts will bring more light to the real issues," she wrote.

**Schmidt**'s 1st Congressional District colleague and fellow Republican, Rep. Steve Chabot, said late Tuesday that he had not read **Schmidt**'s comments but said it is wrong to suggest that the media or anyone else has "overblown" the problems at **Walter Reed**.

"I continue to believe that this is a very serious issue, and the press is doing its job in reporting it," Chabot said. "The media and Congress have an obligation to shine a light on a situation like this. It's intolerable. It is totally unacceptable to treat our military veterans this way."

Since that story, Army Secretary Francis Harvey resigned, hospital commander Maj. Gen. George W. Weightman was fired, and Army Surgeon General and former hospital commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Kiley retired.

Additionally, President Bush has created a commission charged with investigating the treatment of wounded service members, and the military sent so-called "tiger teams" to investigate conditions at VA hospitals across the country.

But **Schmidt** said she found the conditions at **Walter Reed** - one month after the story first appeared and after several congressional hearings had been held on the subject - quite different.

"I toured all four outpatient housing facilities, and was pleasantly surprised to find that three of the buildings contained clean living spaces, updated television and computer access and full access to cooking units or cafeterias," **Schmidt** wrote.

In her column, at [www.house.gov/schmidt](http://www.house.gov/schmidt), she also wrote about touring Building 18, a former hotel that is outside the main **Walter Reed** complex and was the main focus of the Post story.

0 Saved Articles

 this article

[Email](#)
[Print](#)
[Bibliography \(export\)](#)

### Quick Links

[Find articles by Malia Rulon \[mrulon@gns.gannett.com\]\(mailto:mrulon@gns.gannett.com\) and Howard Wilkinson \[hwilkinson@enquirer.com\]\(mailto:hwilkinson@enquirer.com\)](#)  
[Find more articles from page 1A](#)  
[Find more from section "News"](#)  
[Find all articles from March 21, 2007](#)

"While I believe that this building is beneath the standard of what is acceptable, I think it is wrong to suggest that mold found behind an air conditioner somehow is an excuse to say that all of our veterans are receiving substandard medical care," she wrote.

Peter Gayton, the American Legion's director for veterans affairs and rehabilitation, who visited **Walter Reed** the day after the Post story broke, said he wasn't surprised at **Schmidt** 's findings.

"The conditions at Building 18 were not overblown. Building 18 had some problems and none of our wounded servicemen should have been exposed to the conditions," he said. "But other facilities on the **Walter Reed** campus are exemplary . . . and the quality of health care at the **Walter Reed** health facility is outstanding."

Joe Davis, a spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, declined to comment on **Schmidt** 's statement but said there has been some public misunderstanding in the whole situation.

"I don't think the story was overblown," he said. "But there's a perception around the country that what took place at Building 18 was a direct reflection about what took place at the whole complex . . . and that wasn't the case."

**Schmidt** chief of staff Barry Bennett said Tuesday that the congresswoman stands by her column but explained that she was not calling the original story "overblown," just the public misperception that the problems at Building 18 were widespread across the complex.

Still, Dave Lane, chairman of the Democratic Party in **Schmidt** 's home county of Clermont, said **Schmidt** 's "outrageous" comments are not going to sit well with people in her district - particularly those who, like Lane, are veterans.

"Her reluctance to acknowledge the plain truth of a matter is typical," Lane said. "She did it during the campaign when she said that everything was going well in Iraq. She is doing it again."

More than 157,000 veterans were living in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky as of Sept. 30, according to the Veterans Affairs Department.

Inside, online

Excerpt of **Schmidt** 's news release. A15

To read the complete release, go to Cincinnati.Com. Keyword: **Schmidt**

---

**Edition:** Final

**Section:** News

**Page:** 1A

**Record Number:** cin114310052

Copyright (c) The Cincinnati Enquirer. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.

To bookmark this article, right-click on the link below, and copy the link location:

[Hospital not that bad, Schmidt says](#)

[Back To Results](#)

[Previous](#) **Article 5 of 6** [Next](#)