



**For Immediate Release**

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**U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar visits MCTC's Veterans' Welcome Center to discuss new GI bill with students**

Minneapolis, August 21, 2009 – U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar held a roundtable discussion with six student veterans and representatives of the Minnesota National Guard at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) on Thursday, Aug. 20 to discuss the education provisions in the new GI Bill.

Klobuchar co-sponsored the new GI Bill, which passed last year and provides veterans with active duty service on or after Sept. 11, 2001 with education benefits, a monthly living allowance and the ability to transfer unused benefits to a spouse or child. The bill went into effect on Aug. 1, 2009.

“There is no greater investment we can make in the future of our veterans than granting them the chance to pursue a higher education,” said Klobuchar. “By providing these benefits, we truly honor their service and sacrifice and open up the path to opportunity and success in civilian life.”

Klobuchar visited MCTC's Veterans' Welcome Center, where she met with President Phil Davis and director Joy Wise. She met with student veterans Liz Kuk, Craig Laverdiere, Asher Melena, Brian Ivester, Adam Rasche and Ann Gust. Also attending the roundtable were officials from the Minnesota National Guard, including Jon Dahl, Minnesota National Guard's State Education Services Officer.

Melena was one of several students who spoke about the benefits of having improved GI education benefits in partnership with programs like MCTC's Veterans Upward Bound. “I was out of school for

15 years,” Melena said. “MCTC’s Veterans Upward Bound program really helped. I have two kids under the age of three. My Mom watched them during the day, and I came to school. My Dad has owned a process control engineering company in Minneapolis, and I plan to take over the business someday.”

Gust said the new GI bill will allow her to take as many credits as she wants towards a degree in law enforcement, which is important because she is still serving and may be deployed again in the near future. “I am going to take 18 credits this semester,” she said. “I just came back from Iraq two months ago.”

In the next decade, \$78 billion is expected to be paid out under the new GI Bill, which is the most comprehensive education benefit offered since World War II.

“We need to be able to serve the many students who will be returning from service,” said Joy Wise, who was recently named director of MCTC’s Veterans Upward Bound program. “We have one of the oldest, most active programs in the country and have been helping veterans through free college-prep courses and career and financial aid counseling for 37 years.”

Kuk started at MCTC in the spring of 2008 and also will take 18 credits this semester. She is a veteran and a Work Study student in the Veterans Upward Bound program. “MCTC has the best program for veterans among community colleges,” she said.