



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[ICYMI in Sierra Vista Herald: Republican Veteran in AZ-06 Writes that Ciscomani Can't Be Trusted to Stand Up for Veterans](#)

"I'm a retired Air Force Major and a registered Republican and I don't trust Juan Ciscomani to stand up for my best interests in Congress."

TUCSON, AZ — On Sunday, Phil Bentley, a decorated Air Force Veteran and registered Republican, penned an [op-ed](#) in the *Sierra Vista Herald*, highlighting why he's voting for **Kirsten Engel** over out-of-touch Republican Juan Ciscomani. In the piece, Bentley focuses on the votes Ciscomani has taken which would restrict the freedoms of and worsen critical services for veterans. In part, the op-ed reads:

"[Ciscomani's] votes undermine our veterans' rights, the strength of our military, and the very foundations of what our military fights for. That's not what I'm looking for in my Member of Congress.

"That's why in this election, I'm voting against my party and against Juan Ciscomani. I've met Kirsten Engel and I know she will fight for veterans in Congress. I trust her to safeguard our troops and to safeguard the well-being of our veterans."

Arizona's 6th District is home to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Fort Huachuca, and over 74,000 veterans, representing nearly 10% of the district.

You can read the full op-ed [here](#) and below:

[Juan Ciscomani Doesn't Stand Up for Veterans](#)

By Phil Bentley

October 27th, 2024

I'm a retired Air Force Major and a registered Republican and I don't trust Juan Ciscomani to stand up for my best interests in Congress.

In addition to serving in Vietnam and flying the A-10 Thunderbolt II on assignments in Europe and Korea, I served at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base here in the Tucson area. After retiring from the Air Force, I stayed in Southern Arizona, like many of my fellow service members. In fact, Arizona's 6th Congressional District – where both Davis-Monthan and Fort Huachuca are located – is home to over 74,000 veterans (nearly 10% of the district), representing the 9th largest population of veterans in the country.

After 20 years in the Air Force, I returned to civilian life in Tucson. I was lucky to transition smoothly into a job flying for American Airlines, but many of my fellow veterans struggle to adapt to life after the service. I believe it's the duty of our community and our elected officials to ensure that all veterans have access to the tools we need to succeed and the benefits we deserve after our service.

But our current representative in Congress is not fulfilling that duty. Juan Ciscomani has voted against the interests of veterans time and time again, making it clear that when he mentions veterans on his website or during debates and interviews, he is using us as a talking point.

Ciscomani voted for a 22% budget cut to the Department of Veterans Affairs, which would result in 30 million fewer veteran outpatient visits, undermine access to telehealth, worsen wait times for benefits, and fail to honor the memory of our veterans. I know that many of my fellow veterans have had great experiences at the V.A. here in Tucson. Providing these services in veterans' times of need is critical to honoring their service. I simply cannot support a candidate who is willing to cut nearly a quarter of the funding for these essential services.

The V.A. forecasted that these cuts would make housing less accessible for veterans, increase food insecurity, and deprive veterans of mental health, substance use, and other health services. That doesn't uphold the duty owed to veterans after putting our lives on the line for our country.

Ciscomani also jeopardized essential health care for women service members and veterans. Not only did he cheer the repeal of Roe v. Wade, but he has worked to prevent active duty women and women veterans from accessing reproductive care. He voted to fully eliminate abortion care and counseling at the V.A. and to bar the Department of Defense from covering travel for active duty women to access abortion

care. These votes deny our troops basic freedoms and undermine our military readiness.

The U.S. military estimates that almost 36,000 active duty service members were assaulted in 2021 alone – 19,300 of them women. This itself is a travesty which must be addressed, but under current Arizona law an active duty service woman stationed in Arizona who is raped would be barred from accessing abortion care after 15 weeks. And if Ciscomani had it his way, politicians would dictate that our military can't help them access that critical care.

There is a uniquely unsavory irony here. These are women that are risking their lives to defend our freedoms, meanwhile Juan Ciscomani is voting to restrict their freedoms. His votes undermine our veterans' rights, the strength of our military, and the very foundations of what our military fights for. That's not what I'm looking for in my Member of Congress.

That's why in this election, I'm voting against my party and against Juan Ciscomani. I've met Kirsten Engel and I know she will fight for veterans in Congress. I trust her to safeguard our troops and to safeguard the well-being of our veterans. With so many veterans in this district, we must work together to support the candidate that will support us: Kirsten Engel.

** Phil "Bulldog" Bentley is a [decorated](#) retired Air Force Major, who served our country for 20 years, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal with 2 devices, and the Air Medal with 7 devices, among others. He is also a registered Republican who now resides in Arizona's 6th Congressional District.*

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Kirsten Engel is a mom, an environmental attorney, and a former State Legislator who has fought for years to restore funding to public schools, protect Arizona's natural resources, and make our communities safer. She's ready to take that fight to Washington to find common-sense solutions to the challenges we're facing here in Arizona's Sixth Congressional District.