LINDA J. BILMES

Linda J. Bilmes, the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer at the Harvard Kennedy School, is one of the leading experts in the country studying the costs of war, with particular focus on veterans. She has written extensively on this topic, including the landmark 2007 paper, "Soldiers Returning From Iraq and Afghanistan: The Long-term Costs of Providing Veterans Medical Care and Disability Benefits.", KSG Working Paper No. RWP07-001 which has consistently been one of the most downloaded papers in the SSRN network. Her most recent paper is "Current and Projected Future Costs of Caring for Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars." (Watson Institute, Brown University, June 13, 2011).

Bilmes served on the veterans’ transition team for President Obama, and has testified numerous times on veterans issues before Congress. Links to her testimony can be found at:
February 13, 2008 - Testimony before the US House of Representatives Veterans Affairs Committee - Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
May 23, 2007 - Testimony before the US House of Representatives - Veterans Affairs Committee - VA Claims Roundtable Hearing
March 13, 2007 –Testimony before the US House of Representatives - Veterans Affairs Committee - Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

Bilmes currently serves on the US Department of Labor Advisory Board on Veterans Employment, Training and Outreach. She has testified before the Presidential Commission on the Future of America’s Veterans and the US Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Advisory Board. She has appeared before numerous veterans’ organizations, including the Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans for Common Sense; and Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. Her research on veterans has been featured in the American Legion Magazine, Stars and Stripes, and VFW publications as well as general publications including Newsweek, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post, and Foreign Policy. In 2008, she delivered the keynote address on veteran’s issues to the American Neurological Association annual meeting.


Bilmes is the recipient of a Department of Defense grant to write the history of Walter Reed Army Hospital and Bethesda Naval Hospital. Her current research also focuses on women veterans; the costs of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury; and the transition to civilian employment for newly returning veterans. She is part of an interdisciplinary team led by UCSF Medical School in comparing data on recent veterans injuries to data from the Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study.

Bilmes is a peer reviewer for the Institute of Medicine veteran’s publications. She is the recipient of many awards and honors, including the 2008 “Speaking Truth to Power” Award by the American Friends Service Committee. She has been featured in numerous films and documentaries, including Charles Ferguson’s academy-award nominated film “No End in Sight.” She is the daughter of a World War II veteran.