

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I love reading about the history of commemorative days because I always learn something that helps me to appreciate the what, why, and who we honor on those days.

Veterans Day, as you all know, is an opportunity for all of us to remember, recognize, and celebrate events and people in our past who have shaped our present. It was first established in 1918 to honor the veterans of World War I, the first “great war” of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it has had various names (e.g., Armistice Day) and dates, but it has been observed on November 11<sup>th</sup> since 1975. Whatever it is called and whenever it is celebrated, it is a day on which we honor not just World War I veterans, but also those who have served in our military forces both in war time and during peace, overseas and within our borders, in a myriad of roles and capacities.

We know that our nation is better, safer, and stronger because of the sacrifice and service of our veterans, and I hope all of you will join me today in honoring all of our nation’s veterans and, particularly, the thousands of students and the hundreds of CCCS employees who have served or are currently serving. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

We have now endured approximately 18 months of a global pandemic that shows little sign of abating. We also find ourselves in a social and political environment that challenges our patience and our tolerance of our friends and neighbors who may seem to see the world through a different and inexplicable filter that we simply can’t understand. And, as I said at this time last year, the pandemic has transformed our jobs and upended our lives, making it difficult for us to stay connected with our families and each other. Even worse, we have watched as hundreds of thousands of our fellow Americans have lost their lives, and those in other nations have done the same.

Through all of this, and through past national crises, those in uniform have done all that was asked of them to keep us safe. They have endured long periods away from their families and the comforts of home that most of us take for granted. They have done so without complaint, and without wavering from their mission. And, when they returned home, they did so with no expectation of praise or reward. They simply returned to their communities, their families, and their jobs, and they brought their spirit of commitment and dedication with them. For that we are grateful, and our communities, our students, and our faculty and staff are better off.

So remember, Veterans Day is more than a day off (that we take in December, not November). It is a day to remember and to honor our veterans, and to thank them for their service. My father served over 25 years in the US Army and my three brothers also served, one each in the Navy, the Air Force, and the Army. I suspect most of you have a friend or family member who served, as well. All deserve our gratitude.

Happy Veterans Day.



**Joe Garcia**

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