

001205

March 3, 1971
United States Senate

MR. HUMPHREY:

MR. PRESIDENT, 1971 IS THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS. THIS IS THEIR DAY ON CAPITOL HILL. IT IS OUR INADEQUATE TRIBUTE TO THEIR SACRIFICES FOR FREEDOM. I AM DELIGHTED, WITH SENATOR DOLE, TO LEAD THE SENATE'S TRIBUTE TO THIS MARVELLOUS SERVICE-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBERSHIP.

I SALUTE THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS' NATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND THE SACRIFICES THEIR MEMBERSHIP HAVE MADE TO ^{guard and} ~~KEEP~~ AMERICA FREE. THEIR DEDICATION AND PATRIOTISM KEEP US ALL AWARE THAT FREEDOM MUST BE WON ANEW BY EVERY GENERATION.

301-488

- 2 -

IT IS NOT A GIFT NOR IS IT PART OF OUR
INALIENABLE HERITAGE. WE MUST CONTINUALLY
FIGHT TO MAINTAIN OUR FREEDOM.

THE DAV IS AN EXTREMELY REMARKABLE
ORGANIZATION ON MANY COUNTS. FIRST, IT IS A
SELFLESS ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO THE BEST
INTERESTS OF ALL DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
WHETHER THEY ARE PART OF THE MEMBERSHIP OR
NOT. "A VETERAN THAT NEEDS US IS ONE WHO
RECEIVES OUR HELP," IS THEIR MOTTO. THE DAV
IS DEDICATED TO SERVICE -- THAT MOST SCARCE
COMMODITY IN AMERICA TODAY. THE SERVICE-ORIENTED
THRUST OF THE DAV IS ITS SINGLE MOST DISTINCTIVE
CHARACTERISTIC.

- 3 -

THE CASEWORK YOUR SERVICE OFFICERS
SUCCESSFULLY HANDLE IS TREMENDOUS. YOU MAKE
SURE THAT THESE AMERICANS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED
THEIR "QUIET COURAGE" ARE GIVEN THE HELP
THEY NEED TO READJUST TO CIVILIAN LIFE -- A
LIFE MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY THEIR DETERMINATION
AND SACRIFICES IN KEEPING THAT LIFE FREE FOR
ALL AMERICANS.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION RECORDS SHOW
THAT NATIONWIDE THERE ARE 3.2 MILLION DISABLED
VETERANS AND 42,675 OF THESE HEROIC MEN
RESIDE IN MINNESOTA. BUT THE NUMBER OF
DISABLED CONTINUES TO GROW.

- 4 -

THE WAR IN VIETNAM CONTINUES AND MEDICAL SCIENCE ENABLES MORE OF THE WOUNDED TO SURVIVE THAN DID IN PREVIOUS CONFLICTS. THIS MEANS THAT MANY OF THESE YOUNG MEN, AMERICA'S FINEST, ARE RETURNED TO CIVILIAN LIFE WITH UNUSUALLY CRUEL DISABILITIES AND DISFIGUREMENT, WITH WOUNDS OF BOTH MIND AND BODY.

THE DAV, EVEN THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE DISABLED CONTINUALLY INCREASES, IS EVER AT THE SIDE OF THESE RETURNED VETERANS. THIS YOUNG MAN, STUNNED BY WAR AND PERHAPS EMBITTERED BY A RETURN TO A SOCIETY THAT IS LESS THAN APPRECIATIVE BECAUSE OF DIVISIONS IN THE NATION OVER THE RIGHTNESS AND VALUE OF THE WAR, MUST BE HELPED AND IS HELPED BY THE DAV.

491

THEY PROVIDE COUNSELING AND SUPPORT IN
SECURING EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS, HOUSING,
TRANSPORTATION, COMPENSATION PAYMENTS, SOCIAL
AND CULTURAL INVOLVEMENT. THE DAV HELPS MAKE
A DIFFICULT RETURN EASIER TO ACCOMPLISH.

MR. PRESIDENT, A SECOND REMARKABLE
CHARACTERISTIC OF THE DAV IS THAT IT IS
EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING ITS
NATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE GOALS. THERE IS
NOT A SINGLE PIECE OF SIGNIFICANT VETERANS
LEGISLATION THAT IS NOW LAW THAT HAS NOT BEEN
SPONSORED OR ENDORSED BY THE DAV. THIS IS
PARTICULARLY TRUE OF LEGISLATION THAT HAS
SECURED INCREASED AND IMPROVED ASSISTANCE FOR
THE DISABLED VETERAN.

492

- 6 -

THE CATALOGUE OF PAST SUCCESSES IS LONG AND IMPRESSIVE. THERE IS NO NEED TO GO INTO DETAIL HERE. HOWEVER, MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE.

AND THIS IS WHERE I MENTION A THIRD REMARKABLE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE DAV. IT IS IN NO SMALL PART DUE TO THE PERSISTENT AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS OF THIS ORGANIZATION THAT THE SENATE HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW STANDING LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE. I SALUTE THE DAV FOR THEIR PART IN HELPING THE SENATE CREATE ITS OWN COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS.

- 7 -

THIS NEW SENATE COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY THE DISTINGUISHED SENIOR SENATOR FROM INDIANA (MR. HARTKE), IS A FITTING TRIBUTE TO DAV EFFECTIVENESS. IT IS ALSO A CLEAR-CUT EXAMPLE OF THE SENATE'S COMMITMENT TO HELP THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS CONTRIBUTE AS MUCH TO HIS NATION IN PEACE AS HE DID IN WAR.

THIS NEW VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WILL GIVE NEW FOCUS AND SHARPNESS TO THE NEEDS OF AMERICAN VETERANS.

ITS CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS ARE KNOWN FOR
THEIR DEDICATION TO PROVIDING OUR VETERANS
WITH THE BEST IN EDUCATION, REHABILITATION,
HOSPITAL CARE, AND OTHER SERVICES NEEDED
FOR AN EFFECTIVE RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE.

MR. PRESIDENT, I AM PLEASED TO HELP
LEAD IN THIS TRIBUTE TO THE DAV AND TO ALL
AMERICAN VETERANS TODAY. BUT I THINK THAT
FOR US TO STAND HERE AND SING HYMNS OF
PRAISE TO THIS ORGANIZATION AND THE VETERANS
THIS ORGANIZATION REPRESENTS AND HELPS WOULD
BE SOMEWHAT HOLLOW WITHOUT A FOLLOW-UP TO SHOW
THAT WE REALLY MEAN WHAT WE SAY.

- 9 -

TEDDY ROOSEVELT SAID THAT IF A MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH TO FIGHT, HE IS GOOD ENOUGH TO GET A SQUARE DEAL WHEN HE WAS THROUGH FIGHTING. I AGREE WITH HIM. WE SPEAK OF GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A LIFE OF BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY TO ALL AMERICANS. WE ESTABLISH PROGRAMS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED AND DEPRIVED AND THOSE HANDICAPPED IN OTHER WAYS. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CONDITION. THERE ARE THOSE WHO IMPUTE A COSMIC GUILT OF SOME SORT, BUT THERE IS NO DIRECT CAUSE AND EFFECT LINK HERE.

- 10 -

THE GOVERNMENT BY ITS ACTIONS HAS NOT
PURPOSEFULLY GONE OUT AND PLACED CERTAIN
GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS IN TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES.

HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT THE CASE HERE.
THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN HAS BEEN
PLACED BY HIS GOVERNMENT IN THE LINE OF FIRE.
HE IS THERE TO PRESERVE THAT GOVERNMENT AND
WHAT IT STANDS FOR. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF
THE GOVERNMENT TO THE DISABLED VETERAN
CANNOT BE MORE DIRECT OR CLEAR. THE YOUNG
MAN WHO IS RETURNED TO CIVILIAN LIFE AND WHO
CARRIES THE BURDEN OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL
DISABLEMENT OR DISFIGUREMENT IS THE MOST DIRECT
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

- 11 -

THERE ARE SOME WHO SAY, RATHER CYNICALLY,
THAT VETERANS BENEFITS ARE A BOONDOGGLE.
THAT IS NONSENSE. WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO
HELP THE DISABLED VETERAN ACHIEVE IS TO BE
AS EFFECTIVE IN LIVING AND CONTRIBUTING TO
THE BETTERMENT OF HIS OWN AND THE NATION'S
LIFE AS HE WAS IN DEFENDING AMERICA.

THE DISABLED VETERAN DOESN'T WANT TO
SIT BACK AND HAVE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
WIPE HIS NOSE FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.
HE WANTS AND NEEDS ACTIVITY AND INVOLVEMENT
AND SELF-FULFILLMENT AS MUCH AND PROBABLY
MORE SO THAN HIS UNTOUCHED CIVILIAN COUNTERPART.

- 12 -

FOR THIS REASON, I SAY TO MY COLLEAGUES
THAT WE MUST NOT LET THESE WORDS OF HIGH
PRAISE FOR THE DAV ECHO UP AND AROUND THE
SENATE CHAMBER AND THEN GO BLOWING IN THE
WIND. LET OUR PRAISE ALSO BE THE MEASUREMENT
OF OUR COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION THAT
THESE MEN WHO HAVE RETURNED FROM A WAR TORN
IN MIND AND BODY WILL BE GIVEN WHAT IS THEIR
RIGHT -- AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE THEIR LIVES
AS MEN AND TO BE ABLE, IN TIME, TO GIVE FAR
MORE THAN THEY EVER RECEIVED.

- 13 -

THOSE THAT HAVE SACRIFICED TO PRESERVE
THIS NATION HAVE THE RIGHT ~~AND THE DUTY~~ *to participate*
in ~~to~~ *my* HELP AMERICA PROVE WORTHY OF THEIR
SACRIFICE.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org