

SENT  
6:30  
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MAY 24, 1972

TO: Dan

FROM: Mark

SUBJ: Veterans

Here it is -- the text is as short as is possible given the complexity of the veteran situation. It contains California veteran statistics. You will note that the conclusion is brief -- and it contains a 10-point "Agenda for Action for America's Veterans."

HUMPHREY ON VETERANS: A NEW AGENDA FOR ACTION

OUR NATION HAS AN ABSOLUTE OBLIGATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE. I INTEND TO SEE THAT THIS OBLIGATION IS MET THROUGH EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE ADDRESSED TO THE CRITICAL NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS.

AMERICA'S VETERANS HAVE A RIGHT TO DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT

--TO GOOD MEDICAL CARE AND COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION SERVICES

--TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION OR OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT AT A FAIR WAGE

--AND THE RIGHT TO THE SECURITY OF A LIVABLE INCOME THROUGH INCREASED PENSION OR DISABILITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS.

THERE ARE MORE THAN 28 MILLION VETERANS IN AMERICA TODAY. COUNTING VETERAN DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS, ALMOST HALF OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- 93 MILLION -- ARE IN VETERAN FAMILIES. AND HERE IN CALIFORNIA MORE THAN 3 MILLION VETERANS ARE MAKING NEW LIVES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES -- THAT'S OVER 15 PERCENT OF CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION.

FOR THESE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE GIVEN SO MUCH TO THEIR COUNTRY I CALL FOR A NEW AGENDA FOR ACTION TO HELP AMERICA'S VETERANS.

1. EMPLOYMENT

ONE YEAR AGO I EXPOSED THE GROWING PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS. I DEMANDED THAT THE SECRETARY OF LABOR RELEASE MONTHLY REPORTS ON THESE STATISTICS. AS OF APRIL, 1972, THERE ARE MORE THAN 350,000 VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS WITHOUT JOBS. FOR THOSE UNDER 25, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS 12.7 PERCENT. AND IN CALIFORNIA, THERE ARE 30,000 VETERANS UNDER 30 WHO ARE OUT OF WORK.

WHAT DO THESE NUMBERS MEAN? THEY MEAN THAT YOUNG MEN RETURNING FROM THIS NATION'S LONGEST WAR ARE FACED WITH A FUTURE WITHOUT PROMISE, WITHOUT HOPE.

VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS MUST BE GUARANTEED THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE IN PEACETIME TO AMERICA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH MEANINGFUL AND REWARDING EMPLOYMENT.

BUT NOW THERE IS NO SUCH GUARANTEE. PRESIDENT NIXON'S VOLUNTARY JOBS FOR VETERANS IS NOT WORKING -- AND IT WILL CONTINUE TO FAIL AS MORE AND MORE OF OUR MEN COME HOME FROM VIETNAM. ACCORDING TO THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, LAST YEAR ONLY 30,000 NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES WERE CREATED FOR VETERANS --

AND THAT WOULD NOT EVEN TAKE CARE OF ALL THE UNEMPLOYED VETERANS TODAY IN CALIFORNIA.

TO MEET THE CRISIS OF VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT I HAVE JOINED WITH SENATOR CRANSTON TO COSPONSOR HIS VETERANS'EMPLOYMENT AND READJUSTMENT ACT. THIS BILL WILL ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR JOB COUNSELING, TRAINING, AND PLACEMENT SERVICES. IT WILL ENSURE THAT JOB PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS RECEIVE A MUCH HIGHER PRIORITY.-- AND THAT THE FULL ASSISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO EVERY VETERAN WHO CAN WORK, WANTS TO WORK, AND NEEDS TO WORK.

I HAVE ALSO INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR A MORE THAN 5-FOLD EXPANSION OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTLY CREATED UNDER THE EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT ACT -- WITH SPECIFIC PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS.

WITHIN THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, THERE ARE WAYS TO BRING MORE VETERANS INTO THE ORGANIZATION THAT SERVES THEM. THERE SHOULD BE SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS TO PREPARE UNEMPLOYED VETERANS FOR WORK IN VETERANS ADMINISTRATION HOSPITALS. THE V.A. IS THE LARGEST EMPLOYER OF NURSES IN THE COUNTRY -- SURELY IT CAN PROVIDE A WARMER WELCOME TO VIETNAM MEDICS WHO WANT CAREERS IN THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS.

## 2. HEALTH SERVICES

OUR VETERANS NEED AND DESERVE THE BEST POSSIBLE MEDICAL CARE WE CAN PROVIDE. THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR MAKING A VETERAN SIT AND WAIT FOR A DRUG TREATMENT FACILITY, FOR AN ARTIFICIAL LIMB, FOR A NURSE OR A DOCTOR.

LAST NOVEMBER I BROUGHT PUBLIC ATTENTION TO DICTATES BY THIS ADMINISTRATION THAT WOULD PREVENT THE FULL STAFFING OF V.A. HOSPITALS TO CORRECT SERIOUS INADEQUACIES IN VETERAN MEDICAL TREATMENT. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION WANTED TO CUT BY 5,500 THE AVERAGE DAILY BED LOAD IN V.A. HOSPITALS AND IMPOUND \$71 MILLION APPROPRIATED BY CONGRESS TO HIRE 11,000 MORE HOSPITAL PERSONNEL. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BACKED DOWN, BUT IT STILL REFUSES TO MAKE A CLEAR AND COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO THE HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR VETERANS.

WE IN CONGRESS HAVE COMMITTED THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION TO A MINIMUM DAILY PATIENT LOAD OF 85,000. BUT, THE V.A. REPORTED LAST FEBRUARY THAT THE DAILY BED CENSUS WAS ONLY 83,662. AND LOOK AT THE INADEQUATE STAFF/BED-PATIENT RATIO IN THE V.A. HOSPITALS: LAST NOVEMBER IT WAS 1.8:1. NOW IT'S DOWN TO 1.4:1. IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, THE STAFF/BED-PATIENT RATIO CAN BE TWICE THAT OR HIGHER.

THESE FACTS SHOW CLEARLY THAT WE NEED TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THE OPERATION OF V.A. HOSPITALS. AS PRESIDENT, I WOULD CREATE A NATIONAL COMMISSION OF VETERANS, ADMINISTRATORS, LEGISLATORS, AND PRIVATE CITIZENS TO EXAMINE THE PROBLEMS OF MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR OUR VETERAN POPULATION.

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS CAN BE ATTACKED TODAY -- THE NEED FOR VASTLY INCREASED TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM DRUG ADDICTION AND ALCOHOLISM, AND EXPANDED RESIDENT AND OUT-PATIENT PROGRAMS -- ALL FOR THE PURPOSE OF GIVING EACH AND EVERY VETERAN THE BEST CHANCE FOR GETTING OUT OF HOSPITAL AND BACK INTO SOCIETY.

### 3. EDUCATION AND PENSION BENEFITS

WE MUST SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE VETERAN EDUCATION ALLOWANCES. IN ALMOST 25 YEARS, THESE BENEFITS HAVE RISEN ONLY \$50 PER MONTH IN TERMS OF REAL VALUE. VETERANS IN 1948 RECEIVED ADDITIONAL GRANTS FOR TUITION -- THE VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS DON'T. AND TODAY'S VETERANS HAVE TO LIVE WITH SKY-HIGH INFLATION.

WE MUST RAISE THE BASIC MONTHLY EDUCATION ALLOWANCE FROM \$175 TO \$220, AND WE MUST PROVIDE DIRECT ANNUAL TUITION PAYMENTS OF \$1,000 TO COLLEGES FOR EACH VETERAN ENROLLED.

BUT VETERANS IN SCHOOL NEED MORE THAN MONEY. WE MUST EXPAND THE "OUTREACH" PROGRAM OF MAKING VETERANS AWARE OF THEIR RIGHTS. ALL TOO OFTEN THE VETERAN ON CAMPUS SIMPLY NEEDS INFORMATION -- AND HE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO FOR ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE. AND THESE VIETNAM-ERA VETERANS SHOULD BE ABLE TO BUY LOW-COST \$10,000 LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILIES.

FOR DISABLED VETERANS, WE MUST INCREASE COMPENSATION PAYMENTS -- IN MANY CASES THESE ARE MEN WHO HAVE NO OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME. FOR MORE THAN 2 MILLION VETERANS AND VETERAN FAMILIES, WE MUST PREVENT CUTBACKS IN PENSIONS RESULTING FROM INCREASES IN SOCIAL SECURITY AND CERTAIN OTHER RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

VETERANS IN SCHOOL OR IN RETIREMENT -- VETERANS YOUNG AND OLD -- DESERVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THAT MEETS THEIR NEEDS IN THE 1970'S, NOT THE 1940'S.

#### 4. HOUSING

LAST JULY, I JOINED WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO PRESS FOR A REVERSAL OF ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS RESULTING IN EXTENSIVE DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS IN THE DIRECT LOAN PROGRAM FOR VETERANS SEEKING TO PURCHASE HOMES IN CREDIT-TIGHT COUNTIES. THIS VITAL PROGRAM NEEDS TO BE EXPANDED, NOT CUT BACK. I ALSO GAVE STRONG SUPPORT TO LEGISLATION APPROVED IN CONGRESS TO PROVIDE MORTGAGE PROTECTION LIFE INSURANCE FOR DISABLED

VETERANS WHO RECEIVE GRANTS FOR SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING.

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IN ALL THESE AREAS -- JOBS, HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE, PENSION BENEFITS -- VETERANS ARE ASKING FOR A FAIR CHANCE. WE MUST RESPOND TO THEIR NEEDS FAIRLY AND QUICKLY. SIMPLE JUSTICE DEMANDS IT.

WE MUST GET TO WORK AND COMPLETE THE AGENDA FOR ACTION FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS:

1. WE MUST INSIST THAT EVERY VETERAN KNOW HIS RIGHTS AND IS TREATED AS A PERSON AND NOT A NUMBER.
2. WE MUST MAKE THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION RESPOND QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO VETERAN NEEDS.
3. WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT VETERANS HAVE A STRONG VOICE IN THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION.
4. WE MUST GUARANTEE A JOB FOR EVERY VETERAN.
5. WE MUST CREATE A NATIONAL COMMISSION TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED VETERAN HEALTH CARE.
6. WE MUST VASTLY INCREASE THE RESOURCES OF VETERAN HOSPITALS.
7. WE MUST MAKE SURE EVERY VIETNAM-ERA VETERAN CAN AFFORD TO GO TO SCHOOL OR TRAIN FOR A JOB.



8. WE MUST GUARANTEE RETIREMENT SECURITY FOR OLDER VETERANS.

9. WE MUST PROVIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR EVERY VETERAN WHO IS PRICED OUT OF THE HOUSING MARKET.

10. AND ABOVE ALL WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WE ELECT IN NOVEMBER COMMITS ITSELF CLEARLY AND FORCEFULLY TO THE FUTURE SECURITY AND WELL-BEING OF EVERY VETERAN IN THE NATION.

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