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Folder Title:
Veterans Bills Signing, 2/6/91

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Grant/Grossman
February 5, 1991
11:30 a.m. / A:VETS

**BRIEF REMARKS: VETERANS BILLS SIGNING
THE ROOSEVELT ROOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1991
11:15 A.M.**

Good morning. It's a pleasure -- once again -- to have so many familiar faces here today, [acknowledgements/joke].

From ~~the beaches of Normandy to the battle at Midway;~~ ^{Khe Sanh} from ~~the landing at Inchon to the battle of the Ia Drang Valley;~~ even to last week's battle of Khafji, American Marines, soldiers, airmen, sailors and Coast Guardsmen have given 'their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor' to keep freedom safe. We are fighting for peace today as they did then, because America must lead, as we always have, ~~and only can.~~

All of you -- all of us -- have seen combat, that most gut-wrenching of all human experiences. And not one of us will ever forget it. But we are here today to ensure that our nation will ever remember those who defended her -- the men and women who stood where duty required them to stand.

It is my honor today to sign into law two bills which give veterans and their widows the compensation they deserve. The first, HR 3, provides for a 1991 cost-of-living allowance; the second, HR 556, gives monies for compensation and research for veterans suffering from diseases associated with agent orange exposure.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of both the House and the Senate in the tough negotiations over this legislation. And

I want to salute the Members who ensured that a bipartisan spirit prevailed in the end to pass this important legislation. These two bills meet the urgent needs of our veterans -- and will build the confidence of tomorrow's veterans that they and their loved ones will not be forgotten.

A grateful nation salutes ^{all our veterans} you for the difference ^{they} you have made in the history of this country, and of the world. ~~for as a different commander after a different war, said of his own soldiers centuries ago: "If we may have peace, they have purchased it; and if we must have war, they must manage it."~~

Our own fighting forces today are ^{sacrificing today in pursuit of} purchasing tomorrow's peace. ~~right now.~~ Their cause is just and ^{noble} moral, and the American people are behind them ^{right four goal} ~~100~~ percent. I think everyone in this room is as proud of them as I am. //

And while their mission is a difficult and demanding one, not one man or woman serving in the Persian Gulf will not have to ^{fight with one hand tied behind their back - no} stay there one day longer than absolutely necessary. //

Each and every one of them has volunteered to stand against an aggressor who must be stopped; each has gone to stand up for what is moral and right in the world. The brave men and women of Desert Storm know -- as we knew when we faced similar evils in our time -- that when the forces of aggression arise, America stands ready to do the hard work of freedom.

Thank you, and God bless each and every one of you.

Now I will sign these bills into law.

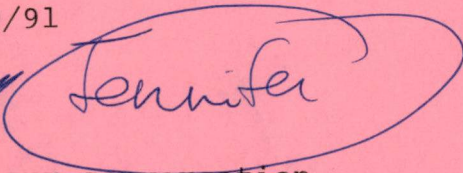
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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MEMORANDUM

1/30/91

Jim:



Jennifer

Per our conversation.

If you need anything else,
please do not hesitate to
call me.

Debbie Smith
226-3660

**HOUSE
VETERANS
AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE**

**NEWS**

335 CANNON H.O.B.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3527

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 23, 1991

Contact: Jim Holley

HOUSE APPROVES BENEFITS INCREASE FOR DISABLED VETS

WASHINGTON -- The prospect of a 1991 cost-of-living increase in benefits for the nation's 2.5 million service-disabled veterans and their survivors now seems certain.

The U.S. House of Representatives today approved by a vote of 421-0 a 5.4 percent hike in VA compensation benefits paid to service-disabled veterans. The increase will be retroactive to January 1 and likely will be reflected in April 1 checks.

"It is unfortunate that it has taken us this long to enact such vital and well-deserved legislation for our disabled veterans and their dependents," said the bill's author, Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery (D-MS), who added, "we owe them our best efforts."

Arizona Congressman Bob Stump, ranking Republican on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, praised Montgomery for fulfilling a promise to make the COLA a high priority in the early days of the 102d Congress. "Sonny has again demonstrated that veterans are number one with him," said Stump.

The House passed a compensation COLA bill in October, but the Senate failed to act due to a dispute over whether expanded benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange should be included in the legislation. An Agent Orange compromise, independent of the COLA and supported by Congressmen and Senators on both sides of the issue, was introduced by Montgomery on January 17. Montgomery, Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, has requested that the Agent Orange measure, H.R. 556, be scheduled for House consideration on January 29.

At least 28 veterans' service organizations and military associations have endorsed the "clean" COLA legislation.

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G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY, MISSISSIPPI
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MACK FLEMING
 STAFF DIRECTOR AND CHIEF COUNSEL

ONE HUNDRED FIRST CONGRESS

G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY
 CHAIRMAN

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

335 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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VETERANS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS OF 1991**H.R. 3**

TITLE: To amend title 38, United States Code, to revise, effective as of January 1, 1991, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of such veterans.

Mr. MONTGOMERY (FOR HIMSELF, Mr. STUMP, Mr. EDWARDS of California, Mr. HAMMERSCHMIDT, Mr. APPELGATE, Mr. WYLIE, Mr. PENNY, Mr. MCEWEN, Mr. ROWLAND of Georgia, Mr. BURTON, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. RIDGE, Mrs. PATTERSON, Mr. JAMES, Mr. PAYNE of Virginia, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. PARKER, Mr. PAXON, Mr. JONES of Georgia, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GEREN, Mr. MAZZOLI, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. MRAZEK, Mr. SHAW, Mr. PRICE, Mr. YATRON, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. BATEMAN, Mr. ROSTENKOWSKI, Mr. TALLON, Mr. IRELAND, Mr. SLATTERY, Mr. RUSSO, Mr. GINGRICH, Mr. VOLKMER, Mr. MACHTLEY, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. MCMILLEN of Maryland, Mr. GALLO, Mr. SYNAR, Mr. WELDON, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. ANNUNZIO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. SISISKY, Mr. DORNAN of California, Mr. BARNARD, Mr. TANNER, Mr. RAVENEL, Mr. THOMAS of Georgia, Mr. TRAFICANT, Mr. STARK, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. WALSH, Mr. GOSS, Mr. HATCHER, Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mr. DICKS, Mr. LEACH of Iowa, Mr. DAVIS, Mr. HORTON, Mr. SWIFT, Mr. COMBEST, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. GLICKMAN, Mr. MARTIN of New York, Mr. HUTTO, Mr. FEIGHAN, Mr. FIELDS, Mr. HOYER, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. HENRY, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. COLEMAN of Texas, Mr. DICKINSON, Mr. MOAKLEY, Mr. MCDADE, Mr. HUBBARD, Mr. VANDER JAGT, Mr. NOWAK, Mr. HEFNER, Mr. BROWN of California, Mr. HAMILTON, Mr. LANCASTER, Mr. COBLE, Mr. RAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MCCLOSKEY, Mr. CONTE, Mr. CALLAHAN, Mr. KYL, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. WOLF, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. DERRICK, Mr. PERKINS, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ATKINS, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. EDWARDS of Texas, Mr. FAWELL, Mr. GREEN, Mr. DORGAN of North Dakota, Mr. ECKART, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. FUSTER, Mr. HALL of Ohio, Mr. RINALDO, Mr. MAVROULES, Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. MANTON, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. JACOBS, Mr. ROTH, Mr. DE LA GARZA, Mr. GAYDOS, Mr. JENKINS, Mr. TRAXLER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. MARLENEE, Ms. OAKAR, Mr. SKAGGS, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. SKEEN, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. TORRES, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. HUNTER, Ms. ROUKEMA, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. GOODLING, Mr. CLINGER, Mr. RICHARDSON, Mr. BROWDER, Mr. SUNDQUIST, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. BACCHUS, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SPENCE, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. THOMAS of California, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. HYDE, Mr. SCHEUER, Mr. EMERSON, Mr. LENT, Mr. KLECZKA, Mr. MCCURDY, Mr. LIGHTFOOT, Mr. LEWIS of Florida, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. BUSTAMANTE, Mr. PICKLE, Mr. DOWNEY, Mr. POSHARD, Mrs. BYRON, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. PETERSON of Florida, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. MOORHEAD, Mr. FORD of Tennessee, Mr. VISCLOSKEY, Mr. EDWARDS of Oklahoma, Mrs. SCHROEDER, Mr. UPTON, Mr. VALENTINE, Mr. LAGOMARSINO, Mr. WHITTEN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETRI, Mr. MCGRATH, Mr. BLAZ, Ms. DELAURO, Mrs. MINK, Mr. MCCRERY, Mr. RHODES, Mr. MORRISON of Washington, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. HANSEN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. SABO, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. SLAUGHTER of Virginia, Mr. QUILLEN, Mr. PICKETT, Mr. WISE, Mr. NEAL of North Carolina, Mr. LOWERY of California, Mr.

CHAPMAN, Mr. THOMAS of Wyoming, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. ANDREWS of Texas, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. HOLLOWAY, Mr. ESPY, Mr. COYNE, Mr. MINETA, Mr. MICHEL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. SMITH of Iowa, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. BRUCE, Mr. PACKARD, Mr. ENGLISH, Mr. HOPKINS, Mr. SOLOMON, Mr. LIVINGSTON, Mr. RITTER, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. ARMEY) introduced H. R. 3 on January 3, 1991, which was referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS: Ms. LOWEY of New York, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. LEHMAN of California, Mr. HOUGHTON, Mr. MCMILLAN of North Carolina, Mr. BEVILL, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. GUNDERSON, Mr. FAZIO, Mr. MCCANDLESS, Ms. LONG, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Ms. VUCANOVICH, Mr. SCHAEFER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. STALLINGS, Mr. BREWSTER, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. CONDIT, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. ROE, Mr. PURSELL, Mr. MYERS, Mr. BROOMFIELD, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. CAMPBELL of Colorado, Mr. STAGGERS, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. MADIGAN, Mr. HUGHES, Mr. REGULA, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. SANGMEISTER, Mr. ERDREICH, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. SMITH of Florida, Mrs. KENNELLY, Mr. BARRETT, Mr. OLIN, Mr. WILSON, Mrs. LLOYD, Mr. PORTER, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. PELOSI, Mr. GRAY, Mr. BAKER, Mr. MOODY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. JACOBS, Mr. TAUZIN, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. BORSKI, Mr. AUCOIN, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. SOLARZ, Mr. ROGERS, Mr. GORDON, Mr. CAMP, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, Mr. NICHOLS, Mr. LUKEN, Ms. UNSOELD, Mr. GILCHREST, Ms. HORN, Mr. GEKAS, Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut, Mr. LAROCCO, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. OBEY, Mr. BROOKS, Mr. ZIMMER, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. JOHNSTON, Mr. DWYER, Mr. DELUGO, Mr. MILLER of Washington, Mr. ASPIN, Mr. ROEMER, Ms. MEYERS, Mr. LAUGHLIN, Mr. HOCHBRUECKNER and Mr. REED.

H.R. 3 would:

Provide a 5.4 percent (rounded to the nearest whole dollar) cost-of-living adjustment in the rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), effective January 1, 1991 for:

- (1) Veterans receiving compensation benefits for service-connected disabilities;
- (2) Surviving spouses and children of veterans who died of service-connected causes in receipt of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC);
- (3) Eligible veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular aid and attendance of another person in their day-to-day activities;
- (4) Eligible veterans in receipt of the housebound allowance;
- (5) Certain veterans paid additional amounts for dependents;
- (6) Veterans whose service-connected disabilities require the wearing or use of a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance which tends to wear or tear the clothing (from \$414 to \$436);
- (7) Surviving spouses in receipt of additional DIC for each child of the veteran under age 18 (from \$65 to \$68 monthly); and,
- (8) Spouses' housebound rate (from \$83 to \$87 monthly).

COMPENSATION AND DIC RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1991

	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
Percentage of disability or subsection under which payment is authorized:		
(a) 10 percent	\$76	\$80
(b) 20 percent	144	151
(c) 30 percent	220	231
(d) 40 percent	314	330
(e) 50 percent	446	470
(f) 60 percent	562	592
(g) 70 percent	710	748
(h) 80 percent	821	865
(i) 90 percent	925	974
(j) 100 percent	1,537	1,620

COMPENSATION AND DIC RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1991—Continued

		Increase (monthly rate)	
		From	To
Higher statutory awards for certain multiple disabilities:			
(k)	(1) Additional monthly payment for anatomical loss, or loss of use of, any of these organs: one foot, one hand, blindness in one eye (having light perception only), one or more creative organs, both buttocks, organic aphonia (with constant inability to communicate by speech), deafness of both ears (having absence of air and bone conduction)—for each loss.	66	68
	(2) Limit for veterans receiving payments under (a) to (j) above	1,911	2,014
	(3) Limit for veterans receiving benefits under (l) to (n) below	2,679	2,823
(l)	Anatomical loss or loss of use of both feet, one foot and one hand, blindness in both eyes (5/200 visual acuity or less), permanently bedridden or so helpless as to require aid and attendance.	1,911	2,014
(m)	Anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands, or of both legs, at a level preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place or of 1 arm and 1 leg at a level preventing natural knee or elbow action with prosthesis in place or blind in both eyes, either with light perception only or rendering veteran so helpless as to require aid and attendance.	2,107	2,220
Percentage of disability or subsection under which payment is authorized:			
(n)	Anatomical loss of both eyes or blindness with no light perception or loss of use of both arms at a level preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place or anatomical loss of both legs so near hip as to prevent use of prosthesis, or anatomical loss of 1 arm and 1 leg so near shoulder and hip to prevent use of prosthesis.	2,397	2,526
(o)	Disability under conditions entitling veterans to two or more of the rates provided in (1) through (n), no condition being considered twice in the determination, or deafness rated at 60 percent or more (impairment of either or both ears service-connected) in combination with total blindness (5/200 visual acuity or less) or deafness rated at 40 percent or total deafness in one ear (impairment of either or both ears service-connected) in combination with blindness having light perception only or anatomical loss of both arms so near the shoulder as to prevent use of prosthesis.	2,679	2,823
(p)	(1) If disabilities exceed requirements of any rates prescribed, Secretary of Veterans Affairs may allow next higher rate or an intermediate rate, but in no case may compensation exceed.	2,679	2,823
	(2) Blindness in both eyes (with 5/200 visual acuity or less) together with (a) bilateral deafness rated at 30 percent or more disabling (impairment of either or both ears service-connected) next higher rate is payable, or (b) service-connected total deafness of one ear or service-connected loss or loss of use of an extremity the next intermediate rate is payable, but in no event may compensation exceed.	2,679	2,823
	(3) Blindness with only light perception or less with bilateral deafness (hearing impairment in either one or both ears is service-connected) rated at 10 or 20 percent disabling, the next intermediate rate is payable, but in no event may compensation exceed.	2,679	2,823
	(4) Anatomical loss or loss of use of three extremities, the next higher rate in paragraphs (l) to (n) but in no event in excess of.	2,679	2,823
(q)	[This subsection repealed by Public Law 90-493.]		
(r)	(1) If veteran entitled to compensation under (o) or to the maximum rate under (p); or at the rate between subsections (n) and (o) and under subsection (k), and is in need of regular aid and attendance, he shall receive a special allowance of the amount indicated at right for aid and attendance in addition to such rates.	1,150	1,212
	(2) If the veteran, in addition to need for regular aid and attendance is in need of a higher level of care, a special allowance of the amount indicated at right is payable in addition to (o) or (p) rate.	1,713	1,805
(s)	Disability rated as total, plus additional disability independently ratable at 60 percent or over, or permanently housebound.	1,720	1,812
(t)	[This subsection repealed by Public Law 99-576.]		

In addition to basic compensation rates and/or statutory awards to which the veteran may be entitled, dependency allowances are payable to veterans who are rated at not less than 30 percent disabled. The rates which follow are those payable to veterans while rated totally disabled. If the veteran is rated 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 or 90 percent disabled, dependency allowances are payable in an amount bearing the

same ratio to the amount specified below as the degree of disability bears to total disability. For example, a veteran who is 50 percent disabled receives 50 percent of the amounts which appear below.

	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
If and while veteran is rated totally disabled and—		
Has a spouse	\$92	\$96
Has a spouse and child	155	163
Has no spouse, 1 child	64	67
For each additional child	48	50
For each dependent parent	74	77
For each child age 18–22 attending school	142	149
Has a spouse in nursing home or severely disabled	169	178
Has disabled, dependent adult child	169	178

COMPENSATION AND DIC RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1991—Continued

Pay grade	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
E-1	\$564	\$594
E-2	581	612
E-3	597	629
E-4	634	668
E-5	651	686
E-6	666	701
E-7	698	735
E-8	737	776
E-9	¹ 770	¹ 811
W-1	714	752
W-2	742	782
W-3	764	805
W-4	809	852
O-1	714	752
O-2	737	776
O-3	789	831
O-4	834	879
O-5	920	969
O-6	1,038	1,094
O-7	1,121	1,181
O-8	1,229	1,295
O-9	1,318	1,389
O-10	² 1,446	² 1,524

¹If the veteran served as Sergeant Major of the Army, Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, or Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse's rate shall be \$875.

²If the veteran served as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Commandant of the Marine Corps or Comandant of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse's rate shall be \$1,633.

When there is no surviving spouse receiving dependency and indemnity compensation, payment is made in equal shares to the children of the deceased veteran. These rates are increased as follows.

	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
One child	\$284	\$299
Two children	409	431
Three children	529	557
Each additional child	105	110

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 1991.

COST: The Congressional Budget Office estimates the cost of H.R. 3 to be \$455 million in budget authority and \$406 million in outlays in fiscal year 1991, \$651 million in budget authority and

\$651 million in outlays for fiscal year 1992, and \$600 million in budget authority and \$600 million in outlays for fiscal year 1993. Additionally, for purposes of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 3 would make no change in outlays or receipts for fiscal years 1991, 1992 and 1993.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY: CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, VOL. 137 (1991).

Jan. 23: H.R. 3 passed House by vote of 421 yeas and 0 nays.

102ND CONG. STATUS PROFILE FOR H.R.3

BRIEF TITLE..... Veterans' Compensation Amendments of 1991
SPONSOR..... Montgomery
DATE INTRODUCED... January 3, 1991
HOUSE COMMITTEE... Veterans' Affairs
OFFICIAL TITLE.... A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to
revise, effective as of January 1, 1991, the rates of
disability compensation for veterans with
service-connected disabilities and the rates of
dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of
such veterans.

CO-SPONSORS..... 311 CURRENT COSPONSORS

Jan 3, 91 Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.
Jan 22, 91 Called up by House Under Suspension of Rules.
Jan 23, 91 Considered by House Unfinished Business.
Jan 23, 91 Passed House by Yea-Nay Vote: 421 - 0 (Record Vote No: 14).
Jan 23, 91 Received in the Senate.
Jan 23, 91 Read twice. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under
General Orders. Calendar No. 4.
Jan 24, 91 Measure laid before Senate by Unanimous Consent.
Jan 24, 91 Passed Senate without amendment by Yea-Nay Vote. 99-0.
Record Vote No: 5.
Jan 24, 91 Cleared for White House.
Jan 25, 91 Presented to President.

CO-SPONSORS..... 311 CURRENT COSPONSORS

AS INTRODUCED..... Stump, Edwards (CA), Hammerschmidt, Applegate, Wylie,
Penny, McEwen, Rowland (GA), Burton, Stenholm,
Bilirakis, Harris, Ridge, Patterson, James, Payne (VA),
Stearns, Parker, Paxon, Jones (GA), Smith (NJ), Geren,
Mazzoli, McNulty, Schumer, Gejdenson, Mrazek, Shaw,
Price, Yatron, Kanjorski, Bateman, Rostenkowski,
Tallon, Ireland, Slattery, Russo, Gingrich, Volkmer,
Machtley, Kildee, McMillen (MD), Gallo, Synar, Weldon,
Boehlert, Annunzio, Alexander, Sisisky, Dornan (CA),
Barnard, Tanner, Ravenel, Thomas (GA), Traficant,
Stark, Schiff, Walsh, Goss, Hatcher, McCollum, Dicks,
Leach (IA), Davis, Horton, Swift, Combest, Smith (OR),
Glickman, Martin (NY), Hutto, Feighan, Fields, Hoyer,
McHugh, Henry, Jones (NC), Coleman (TX), Dickinson,
Moakley, McDade, Hubbard, Vander Jagt, Nowak, Hefner,
Brown (CA), Hamilton, Lancaster, Coble, Ray, Wyden,
McCloskey, Conte, Callahan, Kyl, Gilman, Wolf, Saxton,
Derrick, Perkins, Towns, Snowe, Atkins, Kolbe, Edwards
(TX), Fawell, Green, Dorgan (ND), Eckart, Roberts,
Fuster, Hall (OH), Rinaldo, Mavroules, Collins (IL),
Lewis (CA), Manton, Bilbray, Hefley, Jacobs, Roth, de
la Garza, Gaydos, Jenkins, Traxler, Young (AK),
Marlenee, Oakar, Skaggs, Faleomavaega, Costello,
Santorum, Rohrabacher, Gonzalez, Skeen, Levin (MI),
Torres, Gibbons, Hunter, Roukema, Ros-Lehtinen,
Goodling, Clinger, Richardson, Browder, Sundquist,
Hastert, Rahall, Frank (MA), Bacchus, Rangel, Spence,

Gallegly, Thomas (CA), Mollohan, Hyde, Scheuer, Emerson, Lent, Kleczka, McCurdy, Lightfoot, Lewis (FL), Donnelly, Bustamante, Pickle, Downey, Poshard, Byron, Morella, Peterson (FL), Oberstar, Boucher, Moorhead, Ford (TN), Visclosky, Edwards (OK), Schroeder, Upton, Valentine, Lagomarsino, Whitten, Murphy, Petri, McGrath, Blaz, DeLauro, Mink, McCrery, Rhodes, Morrison (WA), Hobson, Sanders, Hansen, DeFazio, Sabo, Bunning, Slaughter (VA), Quillen, Pickett, Wise, Neal (NC), Lowery (CA), Thomas (WY), Ramstad, Andrews (TX), Oxley, Holloway, Espy, Coyne, Mineta, Michel, Kaptur, Johnson (SD), Smith (IA), Boehner, Bruce, Packard, English, Hopkins, Solomon, Livingston, Ritter, Udall, Arme, Lowey (NY).

Jan 7, 91 Sensenbrenner, Lehman (CA), Houghton, McMillan (NC), Beville, Duncan, Gunderson, Fazio, McCandless, Long, Taylor (MS).

Jan 9, 91 Vučanovich, Schaefer, Markey, Stallings, Brewster, Johnson (CT), Condit, Neal (MA), Roe, Pursell, Myers, Broomfield, Skelton, Campbell (CO), Sharp.

Jan 10, 91 Staggers, Murtha, Madigan, Hughes.

Jan 11, 91 Regula, Gillmor, Sangmeister, Erdreich, Shays, Inhofe, Young (FL), Lipinski, Smith (FL), Kennelly, Barrett.

Jan 14, 91 Olin, Wilson, Lloyd.

Jan 15, 91 Porter, Hall (TX), Carper, Pelosi, Gray.

Jan 16, 91 Baker, Moody, Cardin.

Jan 18, 91 Borski, AuCoin, Chandler, Solarz, Tauzin, Shuster, Rogers, Gordon, Camp, Cunningham.

Jan 22, 91 Nichols, Luken, Unsoeld, Gilchrest, Horn, Gekas, Franks (CT), LaRocco, Peterson (MN), Obey, Brooks.

Jan 23, 91 Zimmer, Jefferson, Johnston, Dwyer, de Lugo, Miller (WA), Aspin, Roemer, Meyers, Laughlin, Hochbrueckner, Reed.

102ND CONG. STATUS PROFILE FOR S.1

BRIEF TITLE..... Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Increase
and Agent Orange Act
of 1991

SPONSOR..... Mitchell

DATE INTRODUCED... January 14, 1991

SENATE COMMITTEE.. Veterans' Affairs

OFFICIAL TITLE.... A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to
increase the rates of disability compensation for
veterans with service-connected disabilities and the
rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for
survivors of those who died from service-connected
disabilities; to provide for independent scientific
review of the available scientific evidence regarding
the health effects of exposure to certain herbicide
agents, and for other purposes.

CO-SPONSORS..... 39 CURRENT COSPONSORS

Jan 14, 91 Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

CO-SPONSORS..... 39 CURRENT COSPONSORS

AS INTRODUCED..... Cranston, Daschle, Kerry, Wirth, Bingaman, Kennedy,
Lautenberg, Levin, DeConcini, Akaka, Baucus, Bryan,
Burdick, Dixon, Durenberger, Gore, Harkin, Leahy,
Riegle, Rockefeller, Sarbanes, Shelby, Simon.

Jan 15, 91 Bradley, Pell, Bentsen, Biden, Adams.

Jan 16, 91 Conrad, Hollings.

Jan 17, 91 Kohl, Exon, Sanford, Graham.

Jan 23, 91 Heflin, Ford, Moynihan, Sasser.

Jan 24, 91 Johnston.



THE MILITARY COALITION

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

January 7, 1991

Honorable G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The 101st Congress adjourned without completing action on an issue of vital importance to this Nation's veterans and their survivors.

Unfortunately, recipients of veterans compensation fell victim to the crush of business in the legislative maneuvering, which occurred in the waning days of the last Congress. Our Nation's veterans, who fought for and defended our way of life, and their widows were denied a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to their compensation benefits. This was not the intent of either the House Committee on Veterans Affairs or the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, as each had voted in committee to award a 1991 COLA. However, as we understand it, the COLA increase was not passed because of an impasse over an Agent Orange provision in the bill.

The Military Coalition, representing some 3.5 million members plus their families and survivors, has written every Member of Congress seeking support for immediate legislative action to provide veterans and survivors a 5.4% COLA retroactive to January 1, 1991. In this regard, we deeply appreciate your leadership in championing the cause for veterans by introducing H.R. 3, a "clean" COLA bill, for immediate action in the 102nd Congress.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures on next page)

Paul H. Arcan

The Retired Officers Assn

Greg A. Langh

Naval Enlisted Reserve Assn

Eric H. Johnson

Assn of U.S. Army

W. J. Fitch

Reserve Officers Assn

Angela V. McNamara

Air Force Association

Robert J. Moore

Navy League of the U.S.

Robert J. Lewis

CWO & WO Assn., USCG

Charles R. Johnson

Non-Commissioned Officers Assn

Mal Brallier

Assn of Military Surgeons

Don Hise

U.S. Army Warrant Officers Assn

Nelson B. Fick

Air Force Sergeants Assn

Norman E. Pearson

Fleet Reserve Association

John M. Adams

The Retired Enlisted Assn

R. C. Laming

Society of Medical Consultants
to the Armed Services

Lawrence R. Gray

Marine Corps Reserve Officers Assn

William J. Lucca

Commissioned Officers Assn

Sydney T. Hickey

National Military Family Assn

Charles Schreiber

National Guard Assn of the U.S.

Philip Taylor

Naval Reserve Association

Bob

U.S. Coast Guard CPO Assn

Charles Pantyze

National Assn for Uniformed
Services

DAV

JAN (4 1991



Motto: "If I cannot speak good of my comrade, I will not speak ill of him."

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NATIONAL SERVICE and LEGISLATIVE HEADQUARTERS
807 MAINE AVENUE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024
(202) 554-3501

January 2, 1991

Honorable G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery
U.S. House of Representatives
2184 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2403

Dear Congressman Montgomery:

As leaders of the below-cited Veterans' Service Organizations, we are writing to you on a matter of utmost importance to our respective national memberships.

The 101st Congress recently adjourned without approving a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the service-connected entitlements of our nation's disabled veterans, their widows and orphans. The subsequent volume of mail that you have received on this subject will attest to the fact that your veteran constituents and their families feel unjustly aggrieved by this oversight.

We fully realize it was not a deliberate decision on the part of the entire Congress that led to the denial of these benefit adjustments. Rather, it was the eleventh hour intransigence on the part of a few individuals regarding the issue of Agent Orange that was the culprit. If disabled veterans were caught unaware by what occurred, in a very real sense, so were most members of the House and Senate.

Our request is simple and forthright:

When the 102nd Congress convenes give your full support to expeditious approval of a "clean" COLA bill. Do not accept the demands of those who will again insist that the COLA legislation be incorporated with provisions relating to Agent Orange. The issue of Agent Orange, as it should, can be debated and favorably addressed by the Congress in 1991. But to require 2.5 million service-connected disability and death compensation recipients to wait while this occurs is, by any standard, patently unfair.

As most of you are aware, "Sonny" Montgomery and Bob Stump, the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, will introduce such a "clean" COLA bill at the onset of the 102nd Congress. We strongly urge you to cosponsor and vote in favor of this legislation. Your support in this matter is eagerly awaited and depended upon by our nation's disabled veterans.

Sincerely,

**AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR
ASSOCIATION**

Francis W. Agnes

FRANCIS W. AGNES
National Commander

**JEWISH WAR VETERANS
of the U.S.A.**

Alfred Schwartz

ALFRED SCHWARTZ
National Commander

**NON COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

Walter Krueger

WALTER KRUEGER
President

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Henry Berube

HENRY BERUBE
President

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

Victor S. McCoy, Sr.

VICTOR S. MCCOY, SR.
President

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Joseph E. Andry

JOSEPH E. ANDRY
National Commander

partners, we must act in America's best interests, and conclude bilateral, trilateral and regional trading pacts.

We would be better off with no GATT agreement at all, rather than signing off on a bad agreement just to be able to say one was concluded. An agreement for agreement's sake would be a tragic mistake.

PROTESTORS SHOULD PROTEST SADDAM

(Mrs. BENTLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BENTLEY. Mr. Speaker, Protesting is an American tradition—protected by the first amendment.

Historically, many Americans are isolationist—oceans separate us from most of the world; and many Americans believe that these distances should separate us from the problems of the world.

In the streets, a few Americans are saying, "No blood for oil." sanction only.

They have this constitutional right—but let us not forget that those men—fighting and dying in the gulf—are protecting this right.

Some would argue that Saddam Hussein's threat is too remote to justify military intervention.

But is he too remote? Ask the Israeli and Arab inhabitants of Tel Aviv and Riyadh.

Saddam has chemical and biological weapons. He wanted a nuclear capability. The sands run red with the blood of his victims; he has gassed his own citizens; he invaded Iran; then, he invaded a defenseless Kuwait. He cries for a jihad against the non-Arab world.

And, if given the opportunity, Saddam would gas us, too.

I find it ironic that antiwar protesters have demonstrated in front of the White House, in front of the Capitol, but not in front of the Iraqi Embassy.

Our protesters should protest Saddam.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken tomorrow.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS OF 1991

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3) to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise, effective

as of January 1, 1991, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of such veterans.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, AND TO SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Compensation Amendments of 1991".

(b) **REFERENCES TO TITLE 38.**—Whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 2. DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

(a) **5.4-PERCENT INCREASE.**—Section 314 is amended—

(1) by striking out "\$76" in subsection (a) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$80";

(2) by striking out "\$144" in subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$151";

(3) by striking out "\$220" in subsection (c) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$231";

(4) by striking out "\$314" in subsection (d) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$330";

(5) by striking out "\$446" in subsection (e) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$470";

(6) by striking out "\$562" in subsection (f) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$592";

(7) by striking out "\$710" in subsection (g) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$748";

(8) by striking out "\$821" in subsection (h) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$865";

(9) by striking out "\$925" in subsection (j) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$974";

(10) by striking out "\$1,537" in subsection (j) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$1,620";

(11) by striking out "\$1,911 and "\$2,679" in subsection (k) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,014" and "\$2,823", respectively;

(12) by striking out "\$1,911" in subsection (l) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,014";

(13) by striking out "\$2,107" in subsection (m) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,220";

(14) by striking out "\$2,397" in subsection (n) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,526";

(15) by striking out "\$2,679" each place in appears in subsections (o) and (p) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,823";

(16) by striking out "\$1,150" and "\$1,173" in subsection (r) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$1,212" and "\$1,805", respectively; and

(17) by striking out "\$1,720" in subsection (s) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$1,812".

(b) **SPECIAL RULE.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases authorized by subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons within the purview of section 10 of Public Law 85-857 who are not in receipt of compensation payable pursuant to chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.

Section 315(1) is amended—

(1) by striking out "\$92" in subsection (A) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$98";

(2) by striking out "\$155" and "\$48" in clause (B) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$163" and "\$50", respectively;

(3) by striking out "\$64" and "\$48" in clause (C) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$67" and "\$50", respectively;

(4) by striking out "\$74" in clause (D) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$77";

(5) by striking out "\$169" in clause (E) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$178"; and

(6) by striking out "\$142" in clause (F) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$149".

SEC. 4. CLOTHING ALLOWANCE FOR CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS.

Section 362 is amended by striking out "\$414" and inserting in lieu thereof "\$436".

SEC. 5. DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES.

Section 411 is amended—

(1) by striking out the table in subsection (a) and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Pay grade	Monthly rate	Pay grade	Monthly rate
E-1	\$594	W-4	\$852
E-2	612	O-1	752
E-3	629	O-2	776
E-4	668	O-3	831
E-5	686	O-4	879
E-6	701	O-5	969
E-7	735	O-6	1,094
E-8	776	O-7	1,181
E-9	811	O-8	1,295
W-1	752	O-9	1,389
W-2	782	O-10	1,524
W-3	805		

"If the veteran served as sergeant major of the Army, senior enlisted advisor of the Navy, chief master sergeant of the Air Force, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, or master chief petty officer of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse's rate shall be \$875.

"If the veteran served as Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Commandant of the Marine Corps, or Commandant of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse's rate shall be \$1,633."

(2) by striking out "\$65" in subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$68";

(3) by striking out "\$169" in subsection (c) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$178"; and

(4) by striking out "\$83" in subsection (d) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$87".

SEC. 6. DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION FOR CHILDREN.

(a) **DIC FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN.**—Section 413(a) is amended—

(1) by striking out "\$284" in clause (1) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$299";

(2) by striking out "\$409" in clause (2) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$431";

(3) by striking out "\$529" in clause (3) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$557"; and

(4) by striking out "\$529" and "\$105" in clause (4) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$557" and "\$110", respectively.

(b) **SUPPLEMENTAL DIC FOR DISABLED ADULT CHILDREN.**—Section 414 is amended—

(1) by striking out "\$169" in subsection (a) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$178";

(2) by striking out "\$284" in subsection (b) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$299"; and

(3) by striking out "\$144" in subsection (c) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$151".

SEC. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE FOR RATE INCREASES.

Section 2(b) and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect as of January 1, 1991.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] will be recognized for 20 minutes and the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. MONTGOMERY).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks, and to include extraneous matter, on H.R. 3, the bill presently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MONTGOMERY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, this is a clean COLA bill which now has some 290 cosponsors in the House. It would provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and in the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation paid to surviving spouses or children of veterans who die of service-connected causes. The increases in these rates would be retroactive to January 1 of this year.

This is a clean bill. It contains no other provisions because we need to get the bill to the Senate and to the President without delay so that the increased rates contained in the bill can be included in checks which veterans will receive on March 1. In other words, Mr. Speaker, when the veteran receives his or her March check, it will contain the increases for January and February.

Mr. colleagues may recall that, on October 15, 1990, the House passed a COLA bill, but the other body failed to take action. You may also recall that, on the last day of the 101st Congress, October 27, 1990, the gentleman from Arizona and I introduced a bill, H.R. 5962, that would have provided the same 5.4 percent COLA as contained in H.R. 3. However, when I attempted to bring that bill up for consideration by unanimous consent an objection was raised and the measure was not passed.

It is unfortunate it has taken so long to enact such vital and well-deserved legislation. I believe the leadership and Members in the other body are prepared to concur in the House bill and send it on to the President.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has also been endorsed by 28 veterans service organizations and military associations. I want to stress that most veterans and military organizations support this legislation. In this regard, I received the following letters supporting the clean COLA:

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,

Washington, DC, January 2, 1991.

Hon. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House
Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MONTGOMERY: As leaders of the below-cited Veterans' Service Organizations, we are writing to you on a matter of utmost importance to our respective national memberships.

The 101st Congress recently adjourned without approving a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the service-connected entitlements of our nation's disabled veterans, their widows and orphans. The subsequent volume of mail that you have received on this subject will attest to the fact that your veteran constituents and their families feel unjustly aggrieved by this oversight.

We fully realize it was not a deliberate decision on the part of the entire Congress that led to the denial of these benefit adjustments. Rather, it was the eleventh hour intransigence on the part of a few individuals regarding the issue of Agent Orange that was the culprit. If disabled veterans were caught unaware by what occurred, in a very real sense, so were most members of the House and Senate.

Our request is simple and forthright:

When the 102nd Congress convenes give your full support to expeditious approval of a "clean" COLA bill. Do not accept the demands of those who will again insist that the COLA legislation be incorporated with provisions relating to Agent Orange. The issue of Agent Orange, as it should, can be debated and favorably addressed by the Congress in 1991. But to require 2.5 million service-connected disability and death compensation recipients to wait while this occurs is, by any standard, patently unfair.

As most of you are aware, "Sonny" Montgomery and Bob Stump, the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, will introduce such a "clean" COLA bill at the onset of the 102nd Congress. We strongly urge you to cosponsor and vote in favor of this legislation. Your support in this matter is eagerly awaited and depended upon by our nation's disabled veterans.

Sincerely,

American Ex-Prisoners of War Association;
Francis W. Agnes, National Commander.

Non-Commissioned Officers Association;
Walter Krueger, President.

Paralyzed Veterans of America; Victor S. McCoy, Sr., President.

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.;
Alfred Schwartz, National Commander.

Blinded Veterans Association; Henry Berube, President.

Disabled American Veterans; Joseph E. Andry, National Commander.

THE MILITARY COALITION,

Alexandria, VA, January 7, 1991.

Hon. G.V. "SONNY" MONTGOMERY,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Cannon House Office Building, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The 101st Congress adjourned without completing action on an issue of vital importance to this Nation's veterans and their survivors.

Unfortunately, recipients of veterans compensation fell victim to the crush of business in the legislative maneuvering, which occurred in the waning days of the last Congress. Our Nation's veterans, who fought for and defended our way of life, and their widows were denied a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to their compensation benefits. This was not the intent of either the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs or

the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as each had voted in committee to award a 1991 COLA. However, as we understand it, the COLA increase was not passed because of an impasse over an Agent Orange provision in the bill.

The Military Coalition, representing some 3.5 million members plus their families and survivors, has written every Member of Congress seeking support for immediate legislative action to provide veterans and survivors a 5.4% COLA retroactive to January 1, 1991. In this regard, we deeply appreciate your leadership in championing the cause for veterans by introducing H.R. 3, a "clean" COLA bill, for immediate action in the 102nd Congress.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Arcara, the Retired Officers Assn.

Erik G. Johnson, Association of the U.S. Army.

Angela McNamara, Air Force Association.

Robert L. Lewis, CWO & WO Assn., USCG.

Max B. Bralliar, Assn of Military Surgeons.

Nelson Fink, Air Force Sergeants Assn.
John M. Adams, the Retired Enlisted Assn.

Laurence R. Gaboury, Marine Corps Reserve Officers Assn.

Sydney T. Hickey, National Military Family Assn.

Phillip G. Saylor, Naval Reserve Association.

Dick Castor, U.S. Coast Guard CPO Assn.

Charles C. Partridge, National Assn. for Uniformed Services.

George A. Lange, Jr., Naval Enlisted Reserve Assn.

Jud Lively, Reserve Officers Assn.

Roberta McCorkle, Navy League of the United States.

Charles R. Jackson, Non-Commissioned Officers Assn.

Don Hess, U.S. Army Warrant Officers Assn.

Norman E. Pearson, Fleet Reserve Association.

Dr. Robert C. Laning, Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Services.

William J. Lucca, Commissioned Officers Assn.

Charles Schrefler, National Guard Assn. of the United States.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, January 9, 1991.

To: U.S. Congress,
From: James L. Kimery, National Commander-in-Chief.

Date: January 4, 1991.

Subject: Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA).

As you know, for the first time last year the 101st Congress failed to approve a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans service-connected compensation payments in the same year in which increases were provided to recipients of social security and similar beneficiaries.

In order to rectify this gross inequity we would now ask you to make the granting of this much deserved and needed COLA your first order of business in the 102nd Congress. Many service-connected disabled veterans depend on their VA compensation payments and the delay of a VA COLA constitutes an unjust hardship.

Therefore, in order to ensure that the COLA bill advances as swiftly as possible, we would ask you to support a "clean" COLA bill, one which is unencumbered by other legislative initiatives. We urge you to

actively work for the expeditious advancement of a clean COLA bill so that America's 2.5 million service-connected disabled veterans will have to wait no longer for the cost-of-living increase that is to be provided to them by a grateful nation.

AMVETS,
Lanham, MD, January 7, 1991.

Hon. G.V. MONTGOMERY,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. MONTGOMERY: AMVETS is encouraged that Congress will soon correct the 1990 deficiency in Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) legislation for veterans by committing itself to the passage of a COLA bill as a first order of business in the 102nd Congress.

AMVETS urges the expeditious enactment of an unencumbered COLA, free from provisions or amendments which may impede its legislative progress through the House and Senate. The merit of this legislation is beyond question and must be pursued with vigor.

The AMVETS constituency looks to the Congress for continued legislative effort on behalf of service-connected disabled veterans and their families. We eagerly await and depend upon your initiative to right the legislative inadequacy of the 101st Congress which shortchanged our Nation's well-deserving veterans. Thank you for your support and representation which will ensure equitable entitlements for veterans.

In service to America's veterans,
ROBERT L. JONES,
National Executive Director.

I thank Speaker of the House TOM FOLEY and the minority leader, BOB MICHEL, for their help and cooperation in bringing this bill up so quickly in this new Congress. It clearly demonstrates their concern and commitment to our veterans and their families.

I'm also grateful to the ranking minority member of our committee, BOB STUMP, and all members of the full committee for their support of the bill. Quick passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker, will send a clear message to veterans who have fought in previous wars and to the tens of thousands of our brave young men and women who are part of Operation Desert Storm that we stand behind them.

Last Friday we passed a concurrent resolution supporting our President and our U.S. troops who are successfully carrying out their missions in the Middle East. When the battle is over and some return home with disabilities resulting from their service, we want them to know that adequate compensation will be paid to them for their injuries.

There follows an additional description of the amendments that would be effected by the bill and an official cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Congressional Budget Office on January 4, 1991.

H.R. 3 would:

Provide a 5.4 percent (rounded to the nearest whole dollar) cost-of-living adjustment in the rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), effective January 1, 1991 for:

- (1) Veterans receiving compensation benefits for service-connected disabilities;
- (2) Surviving spouses and children of veterans who died of service-connected causes

in receipt of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC):

(3) Eligible veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular aid and attendance of another person in their day-to-day activities;

(4) Eligible veterans in receipt of the housebound allowance;

(5) Certain veterans paid additional amounts for dependents;

(6) Veterans whose service-connected disabilities require the wearing or use of a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance which tends to wear or tear the clothing (from \$414 to \$436);

(7) Surviving spouses in receipt of additional DIC for each child of the veteran under age 18 (from \$65 to \$68 monthly); and,

(8) Spouses' housebound rate (from \$83 to \$87 monthly).

COMPENSATION AND DIC RATES EFFECTIVE JAN. 1, 1991

Percentage of disability or subsection under which payment is authorized:	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
(a) 10 percent	\$76	\$80
(b) 20 percent	144	151
(c) 30 percent	220	231
(d) 40 percent	314	330
(e) 50 percent	446	470
(f) 60 percent	562	592
(g) 70 percent	710	748
(h) 80 percent	821	855
(i) 90 percent	925	974
(j) 100 percent	1,537	1,620

Higher statutory awards for certain multiple disabilities:

(k)(1) Additional monthly payment for anatomical loss, or loss of use of, any of these organs: one foot, one hand, blindness in one eye (having light perception only), one or more creative organs, both buttocks, organic aphonia (with constant inability to communicate by speech), deafness of both ears (having absence of air and bone conduction)—for each loss	66	68
---	----	----

(k)(2) Limit for veterans receiving payments under (a) to (j) above	1,911	2,014
(k)(3) Limit for veterans receiving benefits under (l) to (n) below	2,679	2,823
(l) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both feet, one foot and one hand, blindness in both eyes (5/200 visual acuity or less), permanently bedridden or so helpless as to require aid and attendance	1,911	2,014
(m) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands, or of both legs, at a level preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place or of 1 arm and 1 leg at a level preventing natural knee or elbow action with prosthesis in place or blind in both eyes, either with light perception only or rendering veteran so helpless as to require aid and attendance	2,107	2,220

Percentage of disability or subsection under which payment is authorized:	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
(n) Anatomical loss of both eyes or blindness with no light perception or loss of use of both arms at a level preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place or anatomical loss of both legs so near hips as to prevent use of prosthesis, or anatomical loss of 1 arm and 1 leg so near shoulder and hip to prevent use of prosthesis	2,397	2,526
(o) Disability under conditions entitling veterans to two or more of the rates provided in (l) through (n), no condition being considered twice in the determination, or deafness rated at 60 percent or more (impairment of either or both ears service-connected) in combination with total blindness (5/200 visual acuity or less) or deafness rated at 40 percent or total deafness in one ear (impairment of either or both ears service-connected) in combination with blindness having light perception only or anatomical loss of both arms so near the shoulder as to prevent use of prosthesis	2,679	2,823

(p)(1) If disabilities exceed requirements of any rates prescribed, Secretary of Veterans Affairs may allow next higher rate or an intermediate rate, but in no case may compensation exceed	2,679	2,823
(p)(2) Blindness in both eyes (with 5/200 visual acuity or less) together with (a) bilateral deafness rated at 30 percent or more disabling (impairment of either or both ears service-connected) next higher rate is payable, or (b) service-connected total deafness of one ear or service-connected loss or loss of use of an extremity the next intermediate rate is payable, but in no event may compensation exceed	2,679	2,823

(p)(3) Blindness with only light perception or less with bilateral deafness (hearing impairment in either one or both ears is service-connected) rated at 10 or 20 percent disabling, the next intermediate rate is payable, but in no event may compensation exceed	2,679	2,823
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COMPENSATION AND DIC RATES EFFECTIVE JAN. 1, 1991—
Continued

	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
(p)(4) Anatomical loss or loss of use of three extremities, the next higher rate in paragraphs (l) to (n) but in no event in excess of	2,679	2,823
(q) (This subsection repealed by Public Law 90-493)		
(r)(1) If veteran entitled to compensation under (o) or to the maximum rate under (p); or at the rate between subsections (n) and (o) and under subsection (k), and is in need of regular aid and attendance, he shall receive a special allowance of the amount indicated at right for aid and attendance in addition to such rates	1,150	1,212
(r)(2) If the veteran, in addition to need for regular aid and attendance is in need of a higher level of care, a special allowance of the amount indicated at right is payable in addition to (o) or (p) rate	1,713	1,805
(s) Disability rated as total, plus additional disability independently ratable at 60 percent or over, or permanently housebound	1,720	1,812
(t) (This subsection repealed by Public Law 99-576)		

In addition to basic compensation rates and/or statutory awards to which the veteran may be entitled, dependency allowances are payable to veterans who are rated at not less than 30 percent disabled. The rates which follow are those payable to veterans while rated totally disabled. If the veteran is rated 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 or 90 percent disabled, dependency allowances are payable in an amount bearing the same ratio to the amount specified below as the degree of disability bears to total disability. For example, a veteran who is 50 percent disabled receives 50 percent of the amounts which appear below.

	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
If and while veteran is rated totally disabled and—		
Has a spouse	\$92	\$96
Has a spouse and child	155	163
Has no spouse, 1 child	64	67
For each additional child	48	50
For each dependent parent	78	77
For each child age 18-22 attending school	142	149
Has a spouse in nursing home or severely disabled	169	178
Has disabled, dependent adult child	169	178

DIC RATES EFFECTIVE JAN. 1, 1991

Pay grade	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
E-1	\$564	\$594
E-2	581	612
E-3	597	629
E-4	634	668
E-5	651	686
E-6	666	701
E-7	698	735
E-8	737	776
E-9	770	811
W-1	714	752
W-2	742	782
W-3	764	805
W-4	809	852
O-1	714	752
O-2	737	776
O-3	789	831
O-4	834	879
O-5	920	969
O-6	1,038	1,094
O-7	1,121	1,181
O-8	1,229	1,295
O-9	1,318	1,389
O-10	1,446	1,524

* If the veteran served as Sergeant Major of the Army, Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, or Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse's rate shall be \$875.

** If the veteran served as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Commandant of the Marine Corps or Commandant of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse's rate shall be \$1,633.

When there is no surviving spouse receiving dependency and indemnity compensation, payment is made in equal shares to the children of the deceased veteran. These rates are increased as follows.

	Increase (monthly rate)	
	From	To
One child.....	\$284	\$299
Two children.....	409	431
Three children.....	529	557
Each additional child.....	105	110

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, January 4, 1991.

Hon. G.V. MONTGOMERY,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington,
DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the attached cost estimate for draft language as provided by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs concerning increasing rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation.

Because the bill would affect direct spending, we have provided an attachment with the estimate required by clause 8 of House Rule XXI. If the draft bill should be changed, we will make any necessary revisions to our estimate after receiving new legislative language from the Committee.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. REISCHAUER,
Director.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE, COST
ESTIMATE, JANUARY 4, 1991

1. Bill number: None.
2. Bill title: Veterans' Compensation Amendments of 1991.
3. Bill status: Draft language as provided by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, December 19, 1990.
4. Bill purpose: To increase rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).
5. Estimated cost to the Federal Government: Because the compensation cost of living allowance (COLA) is assumed in the CBO baseline prepared under Section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, this bill would have no cost relative to that baseline. The costs of this bill relative to current law are shown in the table below.

[By fiscal years, in millions of dollars]

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Budget authority.....	455	651	600	598	597	596
Outlays.....	406	651	600	646	597	548

The cost of this bill would fall in budget function 700.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

This bill would increase the monthly rates of disability compensation and of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) by 5.4 percent, except that in calculating the new rates all amounts of less than a dollar would be rounded down to the next lower dollar. The new rates would be effective retroactively to January 1, 1991.

This estimate was calculated by multiplying the average costs in each year for all disability compensation and DIC cases by the COLA percentage in the draft bill. The re-

sulting average increase in costs per year were then multiplied by the estimated number of cases in each program each year to calculate the annual cost. Future average cost and caseload levels were projected according to historical trends for recipients by period of service.

The effect of rounding down the benefit calculation was estimated by determining the payment rates that otherwise would have been rounded up. The sum of the payments made at each affected rate was then multiplied by the loss of \$1 per month. The cost of the COLA was reduced by the resulting amount.

The budget authority and outlays for 1992 include the cost of one month of the 1991 benefit increase, estimated to be \$50 million. In previous years, the disability compensation and DIC cost of living increases have been effective on December 1. This bill would make the increased rates effective on January 1, 1991. Nevertheless, pursuant to section 8005 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 the benefits to be paid on January 1, 1992 must include an additional payment equal to the amount of the monthly increase on January 1, 1991.

6. Pay-as-you-go considerations: Section 252 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 sets up pay-as-you-go procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or receipts through 1995. The benchmark against which changes in direct spending or receipts are measured is the baseline as described in Section 257 of the 1985 law. The spending increases shown above are included in that baseline. For this reason, this draft bill has no pay-as-you-go implications.

7. Estimated cost to State and local government: The Congressional Budget Office has determined that the budgets of state and local governments would not be significantly affected by the enactment of this bill.

8. Estimate comparison: None.
9. Previous CBO estimate: None.
10. Estimate prepared by: Sandra Clark.
11. Estimate approved by: James L. Blum, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATE¹

The "applicable cost estimate of this Act for all purposes of sections 252 and 253 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 shall be as follows:

[By fiscal year in millions of dollars]

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Change in outlays.....	0	0	0	0	0
Change in receipts.....	0	0	0	0	0

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. STUMP asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUMP. I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the Veterans' Compensation Amendments of 1991. This is the 5.4 percent COLA Chairman MONTGOMERY

¹ An estimate of a bill to increase the rates of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation provided to the Congressional Budget Office in draft form on December 19, 1990. This estimate was transmitted by the Congressional Budget Office on January 4, 1991.

and I promised would be our top priority in this new Congress.

In the closing days of the 101st Congress, the disabled veterans' COLA became entangled in the agent orange issue which has since been resolved. This is a noncontroversial clean COLA which we fully expect to be quickly considered by the Senate and which the President stands ready to approve.

Chairman MONTGOMERY and the House leadership deserve our commendation for moving this legislation at the first opportunity, and I urge my colleagues to give their unanimous support to it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the great chairman of the Subcommittee on Compensation, Pensions, and Insurance of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. APPLGATE).

Mr. APPLGATE, Mr. Speaker, I too wish to commend Chairman MONTGOMERY for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor today. I am pleased to have been an original co-sponsor, along with more than 220 of our colleagues in the House. This is a commitment I made to America's Veterans.

As the chairman has indicated, the bill provides a retroactive 5.4-percent COLA in rates of service-connected disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation for disabled veterans and their survivors.

It was indeed unfortunate that we were not able to pass this COLA at the end of the last session. Certainly, it was not due to a lack of effort of my committee or the leadership of the House and Senate committees. Unfortunately, however, unresolved issues surrounding the agent orange controversy kept any veterans legislation from being considered in the other body in the closing days of last session.

I am deeply gratified that, due to the efforts of the chairman and ranking minority member, as well as the leadership of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, as well as Congressman EVANS and myself. A compromise agreement on agency orange has finally been achieved. I will support that compromise when the chairman brings it before the House.

As to future COLA's, I will do everything within my power to ensure that this type of delay in enacting legislation to provide both timely and full COLA's will never happen again. The COLA for America's most deserving should never be held hostage to any unresolved issues of any kind, particularly now when we will see hundreds of thousands of Persian Gulf veterans coming into the system.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

D 1240

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this, and, before I sit down, I would like to extend my thanks also to the vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Compensation, Pension, and Insurance, and that is the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. McEWEN], and I congratulate him for moving on, if my colleagues want to call it that, to the Committee on Rules. Hopefully the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. McEWEN] will be looking after the veterans issues while as a member of that distinguished body. But we will miss him on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs because he was a very honored and valued member of that committee, and I wish him well.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HAMMERSCHMIDT], the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care.

Mr. HAMMERSCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in strong support of H.R. 3, the Veterans' Compensation Amendments of 1991. This bill will provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living increase in compensation benefits for service-connected disabled and their eligible dependents, retroactive to January 1, 1991. This bill is necessary because over 2 million disabled veterans were unexpectedly denied a cost-of-living increase before the 101st Congress adjourned—the only Federal beneficiaries so denied.

On October 15, 1990, the House passed H.R. 5326, which would have provided veterans with a COLA for fiscal year 1991. However, the Senate failed to act on the bill as a result of its controversial provisions relating to compensation for agent orange.

Senior members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs subsequently fought to bring a clean COLA bill to the House floor in the waning hours of an all-night final session. Hopes of passing this legislation were defeated when one member objected to the bill.

As the first order of business in the 102d Congress, I introduced H.R. 332, as well as co-sponsored H.R. 3, in order to correct this grave injustice.

It is imperative that we immediately enact a fiscal year 1991 cost-of-living increase for service-connected disabled veterans and their eligible dependents, retroactive to January 1, 1991. The United States is unquestionably indebted to its veterans and in denying them a COLA, we have done them a great disservice. As our Nation once again commits large numbers of its citizens to battle, we cannot forget those who have previously answered a similar call in wars past.

I implore my colleagues to support H.R. 3, an unnumbered COLA bill, in order to show our veterans the respect they so rightfully deserve.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. MAZZOLI].

(Mr. MAZZOLI asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MAZZOLI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], my friend and chairman, for the time. Let me rise both in support of this very important legislation, which, as we know, was adopted by the House last year, but did not pass the other body, and also rise in support of the work that my friend from Mississippi has done as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. He has stood stalwart for the years he has chaired that committee on behalf of our veterans, the men and women who serve the colors of this country.

Mr. Speaker, as has just so aptly been pointed out a moment ago, unfortunately there will be people returning from Desert Storm who will have been injured in the service of their country for whom COLA adjustments will become extremely important. So I think this is extremely urgent that we adopt this measure retroactively to January 1 which provides a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment to service-connected disabled veterans, unanimously, and move it through to passage in deference to the sacrifices made by current, past, and future veterans of this Nation.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. CONTE].

Mr. CONTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the Veterans Compensation Amendments of 1991.

Mr. Speaker, last week this body overwhelmingly approved a resolution pledging support for our troops overseas. Fittingly, that vote is being followed today by consideration of a measure to provide a 5.4 percent COLA for disabled veterans and their dependents. American men and women engaged in hostilities in the Persian Gulf must be assured that their leaders at home support their efforts and share their confidence in ultimate success. But it is also important in these turbulent times to remember the sacrifices of all veterans who have heeded the call of duty and have paid dearly for their patriotism.

I applaud the leadership for taking swift action to correct the failure of the 101st Congress to enact a benefit adjustment for our disabled veterans. I congratulate my dear and wise friend, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the gentleman from Mississippi, the Honorable SOKNY MONTGOMERY, for his tireless efforts on behalf of America's veterans. I am also proud to acknowledge the dedicated work of the committee's ranking minority member, the gentleman from Arizona, the Honorable BOB STUMP. The gentleman pledged to bring a veterans COLA bill to the floor early in

this session, and today's action represents fulfillment of that promise.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 3. This legislation permits us to keep faith with veterans who rely on us to provide them with the modest assistance they require to live with dignity. It reassures the veterans who witnessed the death of last year's COLA bill that they have not been forgotten amid the legislative chaos. And it sends a signal to our present troops and Reserves that this country has a commitment to its servicemen and servicewomen which it will not abrogate.

Let no one question the commitment of the U.S. Congress to our troops and to our veterans. Although the character of battles fought and causes defended have varied over the years, the American patriot's response to the call of duty has been the same. He has served his country with pride, dignity, and respect. It is our corresponding duty, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 3.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HARRIS].

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a vital matter for our Nation's veterans. Today the House will consider under the Suspension Calendar House Resolution 3.

House Resolution 3 provides a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment in compensation for those veterans with service-connected disabilities. In addition, this 5.4 percent adjustment will be given to dependents of veterans who die of service-connected causes. This 5.4 figure is the same percentage already provided to Social Security beneficiaries on January 1, 1991.

Last year, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed similar legislation. However, the other body failed to consider this issue before adjournment of the 101st Congress. If we act responsibly today, disabled veterans will receive this supplement in their checks in the near future.

Since these COLA's were already included in the budget baseline for fiscal year 1991, there will be no negative effect on the Federal budget. These provisions will not trigger a "pay-as-you-go" sequestration.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the support of the entire Congress for this important legislation.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN].

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 3, a measure I have cosponsored, increasing the rates of disability compensation for veterans and their survivors.

I would like to commend the distinguished chairman of our Veterans Committee, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] for fulfilling his promise to our Nation's veterans in introducing this important measure, at this early date in the 102d session of Congress, and the ranking minority member, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] for his unceasing efforts on behalf of our Nation's veterans.

H.R. 3 authorizes a deserving 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment, retroactive to January 1, 1991, for disabled veterans as well as for families of veterans who died from service-connected injuries.

Mr. Speaker, 2.5 million service-connected disabled veterans depend on their VA compensation payments and the delay of their 5.4 percent VA COLA constitutes an unjust hardship. Expedient passage of this important veterans benefits measure will confirm the support in the Congress for our Nation's veterans.

This measure further authorizes annual increases in the rates of compensation for service-disabled veterans and the survivors of service persons who die in service and veterans who die as a result of service-connected conditions.

Mr. Speaker, as "Operation Desert Storm" continues to escalate, it's timely that we send a clear message to our Nation's Armed Forces, as well as our Nation's veterans that our Nation acknowledges their sacrifices and their dedication on behalf of our Nation. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to fully support H.R. 3.

□ 1250

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. SLATTERY], a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. SLATTERY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the committee for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 3.

As we stand here today, American men and women are risking their lives in the Persian Gulf.

Like millions of soldiers before them, they are fighting courageously for the beliefs they hold dear.

It is important that we honor the commitment we have made to all those who have answered their Nation's call to duty.

Last year, the House passed this measure and the budget agreement funded it, but the other body was unable to agree to give disabled veterans the same 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment received by other civil service and military retirees, and Social Security recipients.

Mr. Speaker, it is simply unfair to single out disabled veterans and deny them their cost-of-living adjustment.

Today, we must correct this injustice.

With almost 15,000 of my constituents currently serving in Operation Desert Storm, I pray that all of them will return safely.

But, in the event that some do not, I want to make sure that they know the Congress of the United States will honor the commitments made to our military personnel.

With the passage of H.R. 3 they will know the Congress stands with them and will treat them fairly in the matter of cost-of-living adjustments.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3 and hereby express our unwavering support for our nation's disabled veterans.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS].

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, almost 120,000 veterans live in the part of the country in which I live. They disagree on much, but they are certainly together on this issue. They want to know, how did this thing happen with the COLA's, and can it be fixed? Of course, the answer to that is yes, we can fix it.

At this point I must congratulate the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], and the ranking member, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], for their extraordinary activity, for their prompt and definite attention and taking the necessary action to get the fix done as promised.

I was told in correspondence and in dialog when I first heard about this that the first order of business when we came back in the 102d Congress would be to address this issue, and I would certainly agree that it has been the first order of business absent is one other unforeseen piece of business which all veterans would agree needed our support and needed our urgent attention.

I do not think that there is any question about the merits of this. We are not dealing with merit here; we are dealing with something that is business and that should have been completed. In my area, as, I suspect, in many other areas, veterans are underserved. We do not have all the veterans' centers we need, and we do not have all the hospital beds we need. We certainly are stretching our outpatient facilities. We are using facilities designed for 40,000 cases a year, and we now have 50,000 cases a year.

There are reasons why we have these shortages. We do understand that, but there is certainly no reason to be short of the COLA's retroactive to the first of January.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in this legislation, a clean bill, with no baggage and no excuses. Let us pass H.R. 3.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. JONES], who also is a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. JONES of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the veterans' compensation COLA. On behalf of the almost 80,000 veterans who reside in, Georgia's Fourth District, I would like to express appreciation to the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], to the ranking minority member, and to the House leadership for expediting this overdue measure.

As has been noted, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3 provides veterans who have service-connected disabilities with a 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment and provides dependency and indemnity compensation for dependents of veterans who die of service-connected causes.

It is timely that we deal with this vital measure today. By doing so, we recognize the sacrifices of America's service men and women who, as we speak, are standing vigilantly in the deserts of the Middle East.

This bill reflects a small part of our commitment to them, Mr. Speaker, in return for their courageous commitment to honor, to duty, to their country, and to the cause of peace.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. RIDGE].

(Mr. RIDGE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3, legislation that will provide a 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment or COLA to disabled veterans, as well as families of veterans who died from service-connected injuries. As a veteran and member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, this legislation has my full support, and I am pleased that the House has taken up its consideration so soon in the 102d Congress. Consideration and passage is long overdue because without this COLA many veterans and their families are deprived of an important benefit to which they are fully entitled.

As members of the full committee are fully aware, passage of this important legislation was stalled in the 101st Congress because of disagreement over the agent orange provisions. I hope, as do my colleagues, that with this clean COLA and the recent introduction of H.R. 556—by Chairman MONTGOMERY and Congressman STUMP—that these issues will be addressed and resolved in the 102d Congress. We owe this immediate action to our veterans, who expect nothing more than the benefits provided to other COLA recipients.

I trust that my colleagues will join in an overwhelming vote of support for this legislation as a show of support for our disabled American veterans who served so proudly in past conflicts. I also hope that this legislation will send an important message to the brave men and women serving in the Persian Gulf that our Nation's commitment to them will endure long after the last days and successful completion of Operation Desert Storm.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the chairman of the Subcommittee on Education, Training, and Employment of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. PENNY].

(Mr. PENNY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENNY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3, legislation allowing a 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment in the compensation programs for disabled veterans and dependency and indemnity compensation [DIC] for surviving spouses and children of these veterans.

In the past 7 days we have gained heightened awareness of the costs of war—its human, emotional, and financial toll. This bill reminds us once again of the ongoing costs of war. It is our duty to provide adequate compensation to those who have carried out their duty on behalf of our country and have suffered disability as a result. We owe these veterans far more than what it is in our ability to compensate; we owe them our freedom and our way of life. This legislation is but small recognition of that debt.

Last fall, Congress failed to pass this same 5.4-percent COLA. It was unfortunate, and perhaps irresponsible, that the agendas of a few prevented this legislation from being passed in a timely manner. Instead, we are acting today to put in place a COLA retroactive to January 1. If the Senate and the President also act quickly, this still means that the COLA will not be in the hands of our veterans until the March check—at least a 3-month delay.

Some have argued the need for an automatically indexed COLA for these programs such as that in place for Social Security. With the support of veterans service organizations, we have rejected this approach in the past. I believe that we should continue to set COLA's on an annual basis, but we must also pledge that we will not allow delays to occur. Our disabled veterans and their families should not suffer as a result of our inability to act.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation. I commend the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] and the ranking minority member of the committee, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], and I appreciate the

Speaker's cooperation in allowing this to be brought forward as one of the first items of business in this session of Congress.

□ 1300

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] yield me 5 additional minutes?

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Mississippi 5 minutes. May I inquire of the Chair how much time that leaves?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). The gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] has 5 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS], a new member of our committee. The gentleman requested that he be on our committee. This is the gentleman's maiden speech, and we are glad it is on veterans.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in behalf of H.R. 3, the veterans COLA bill, which I have cosponsored. As young American men and women are bravely fighting in the Persian Gulf, it is only right that this Congress reconfirms its commitment to our veterans, past, present, and future. As a former staff aide to the most decorated veteran to ever serve in Congress, the late Olin E. "Tiger" Teague, I believe no single group in America deserves greater support or loyalty than our veterans. When American soldiers die for us in wartime, it is our obligation, in fact our moral responsibility, to support them in peacetime.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] for his leadership in passing this COLA bill last year, and appreciate and respect his perseverance in seeing that our well-deserving veterans will receive their COLA this year. Mr. Speaker, our veterans fought for us; it is time for us to fight for them.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS], a new member of our committee, who also asked to be on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my thanks to the chairman and all of the members of this committee who have worked hard to bring this bill before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3 which extends cost-of-living adjustment for veterans' compensation. However, I am also deeply concerned about the plight of our veterans, particularly in light of President Bush's recent decision to go to war in Iraq. Now more than ever it is critical that we deliver humane and just compensation to those Americans who have

served and are serving this country in wartime.

Unfortunately, the state of veterans' program is a sad one. Our own Veterans' Administration reports a series of spending and programs shortfalls which make life for veterans more difficult than it already is. For example, a 1991 survey of VA hospitals revealed that 2,000 beds were closed nationwide because of inadequate resources and staff. This represents one-fourth of the total operating capacity. The VA has testified that they are 3 years behind in replacing old and worn out equipment, \$700 million worth. Additionally, VA health care professionals are leaving the VA in significant numbers for the private sector because of the higher pay and benefits.

There is more bad news. At the end of fiscal year 1989, only 26.7 percent of original compensation claims were processed within 90 days—the VA has said its minimum requirement is for 35 percent to be filed within 90 days. Indeed, some veterans must wait 6 months for a decision on claims for compensation. And in fiscal year 1990, \$92 million was cut from veterans' programs to fund the war on drugs and another \$192 million was cut due to sequestration. The effects of these cuts were primarily felt in veterans' medical care programs.

At a time when the United States has seen fit to forgive nearly \$7 billion in loans to the Government of Egypt because of their cooperation in the war in Iraq, it seems as though it would be possible to begin to address the woeful shortcomings in our veterans' compensation system. I hope that this legislation today in only the beginning of our commitment to veterans.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON].

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I just want to say, as a lifetime member of the American Legion and as a lifetime member of the Marine Corps League, I want to thank the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] and I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], and every member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for the great job they do for the veterans of this Nation. Sometimes one would think that we do not give good service to the veterans. We give great service to the veterans. I commend the Members for it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. OAKAR]. Mr. Speaker, I might say that a number of the members of her family have served in the service. She has been awfully supportive of our veterans' programs over the years.

(Ms. OAKAR asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. OAKAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. To the distinguished chairman, General MONTGOMERY, you are a man of your word. You assured all of us that this would be on the front burner, restoring this benefit and commitment to our Nation's veterans, and we are here today, and I suspect this will pass unanimously. I want to congratulate the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. APPLEGATE], and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. McEWEN], and other distinguished minority members, for dealing with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, every year the administration forgets certain groups of older Americans. Federal employees, they forget the military, and railroad employees and retirees. Every year for the last 10 years I have introduced a bill to restore that cost-of-living adjustment. In the last session, we had about 340 cosponsors. I think everybody got the message that this was wrong to not include every older person for this cost-of-living adjustment. That is why H.R. 3, which grants a 5.4-percent COLA to all U.S. veterans, retroactive to January 1, 1991, is so important.

Mr. Speaker, there are 2.2 million Americans who will be affected by this legislation. There are 300,000 surviving dependents. COLA's range from \$4 per month for those on the minimum 10-percent disability compensation to as much as \$144 a month for severely disabled veterans.

Mr. Speaker, however great or small, this compensation is vital to these individuals, and is owed to them. It sends a very important symbol to our veterans that we care about them.

Mr. Speaker, the integrity of these benefits must be considered a sacred trust. As we ask a new generation of young Americans to lay down their lives on the line for their country in the Middle East, our brave American veterans must know that Congress' commitment to them is a sacred obligation. I urge Members to support this legislation.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. OXLEY].

(Mr. OXLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, and I am pleased to be listed as an original cosponsor of this measure.

I was disappointed that Congress failed to enact a cost-of-living adjustment for service-connected disabled veterans last year. This 5.4-percent retroactive COLA will resolve the problem, but it does not excuse the fact that the COLA for disabled veterans and their survivors was held hostage for nearly 3 months.

During these troubled times, when our brave men and women are risking all to liberate a small, defenseless country, we cannot help but remember other brave Americans who were in the service of their Nation.

Many of the veterans who will receive this COLA know the feeling of anxiety before combat. They have seen the horrible sights of compatriots lost in battle. They understand the fear, the awesome sense of responsibility, and the immense pride that those men and women involved with Operation Desert Storm now feel.

Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the current action in the Persian Gulf will not result in a great increase of disability compensation for veterans. Thus far, the gulf operation has proceeded with few casualties and few setbacks. However, as President Bush has repeatedly pointed out, war is never easy, and it is never painless.

The COLA legislation now before us recognizes the sacrifices made by veterans. They have served our Nation well; it is now time to keep up our end of the promise. We must adequately compensate disabled veterans and their survivors.

We also must realize that the servicemen and women of today will be the veterans of tomorrow. I know that our promise and responsibility to them will likewise be kept.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada [Mr. BILBRAY].

(Mr. BILBRAY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3, legislation to provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living increase [COLA] for service-connected disabled veterans and their eligible dependents or survivors.

Although the 101st Congress provided cost-of-living increases for our Federal retirees and Social Security recipients, we failed to grant a similar and proper increase in VA disability compensation. The failure to act did not diminish the support in Congress and throughout the country to our veterans, especially at a time when we have asked over 400,000 of our servicemen and women to serve in the Persian Gulf.

I want to commend Chairman MONTGOMERY and Representative BOB STUMP for their leadership in bringing this measure to the floor for a vote. The legislation, which was cosponsored by over a majority of House Members, will provide a COLA for 2.2 million veterans and 300,000 widows and children of veterans who have died of service-connected causes.

In Nevada we have 12,255 veterans receiving disability compensation and roughly 1,500 people receiving dependency compensation. The veterans receiving these benefits are those who were injured in war-related incidents, died in service, or of service-related causes.

When the veterans call upon their country for assistance, we must not fail. We cannot put a price on the service which they have

performed. Veterans' benefits are not repayment, but a tribute to those who so bravely served their Nation.

Passage of this bill is a high priority and I am pleased to support approval of the legislation.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. BYRON], the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation of the Committee on Armed Services. We have worked very closely with her on veterans programs, as well as military personnel programs.

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Mrs. BYRON. Mr. Speaker, let me suggest to the gentleman from Michigan that he needs not strike all of his words. He can leave the words that he is in support of H.R. 3 in the RECORD.

Let me say, first of all, that there are many times when we let this Nation down. I think the most important thing we have is our word, and our word to our veterans last year was not there.

H.R. 5326 was a bill last year. In the final hours of the 101st Congress, our veterans were let down.

I am delighted to say that H.R. 3, yes, H.R. 3 is important because it shows the concern and the importance that we give to this legislation that is up before us today. Our veterans have always been there when we needed them. Last year we were not there for them.

Today we have almost 478,000 American troops in the gulf, and, yes, those troops will be coming home veterans. They are volunteers.

What makes a veteran? A veteran is a young man or young woman in this country in today's world who chooses to raise their hand to go out and to support their Nation, and so these veterans will be back. Let us only hope that when they do come back and become veterans that our word is there.

So H.R. 3, as we pass it today, once again, gives that word to those veterans who have gone before us that, yes, this Nation will stand behind them and will make sure that what is right is there.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to a former member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs who went to the Appropriations Committee, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RICHARDSON].

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I join Chairman MONTGOMERY today in support of H.R. 3, a clean veteran's COLA bill, and correcting an egregious wrong.

This bill will provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living increase for the 2.2 million veterans who were hurt while bravely serving our country.

As you remember, the House overwhelmingly supported this COLA last year. Unfortunately, the support we showed for our veterans was held hostage by the Senate.

We cannot allow the veterans to continue without this entitlement. Mrs. Dolores Chesterfield, of New Mexico, the wife of a disabled World War II veteran, asks me:

Does it make sense to you that a COLA was approved for Social Security recipients, Federal employees and retirees, military personnel and retirees, but not for disabled veterans? Why should any one of those groups have priority over disabled veterans who gave so much for so many?

What do you suppose goes through the mind of a serviceman in Saudi Arabia right now if he reads or hears that Congress did not approve a COLA for disabled veterans, but did approve one for the other groups?

This bill provides a 5.4-percent COLA in compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities, as well as dependency and indemnity compensation [DIC] for dependents of vets who die of service-connected causes. The bill is retroactive to January 1, 1991.

I have received approximately 75 letters in support of this legislation and none in opposition.

This bill passed last October by voice vote, but no action was taken on it in the Senate. The Senate failed to act because the bill included other controversial provisions, particularly regarding agent orange compensation.

This bill will finally bring our deserving veterans their long overdue COLA, without the delays a more comprehensive bill might face. Other important veteran's issues will be addressed in the omnibus veterans' compensation bill, of which I am also an original cosponsor.

The cost of this COLA has already been included in the budget baseline and is not considered to produce new entitlement spending; for this reason, it would not affect calculations that trigger the pay-as-you-go sequestration.

The agent orange controversy has been resolved and will be dealt with in legislation next week.

SUMMARY OF COMPROMISE BILL ON AGENT ORANGE

Section 1 states the short title to be the "Agent Orange Act of 1991."

Section 2 establishes a statutory presumption of service connection in a new section 318 of title 38 for three conditions: Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; soft-tissue sarcomas; and chloracne (if manifested w/in 1 year from last date of service in VN).

Section 2 also establishes a mechanism in new section 318 by which the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs can, by regulation, presume service connection for additional disabilities suffered by veterans who served in Vietnam if he determines that a positive association exists between herbicide exposure and the occurrence of disease in humans. For purposes of the Secretary's determination, an association would be considered positive if the credible evidence for the association is equal to or outweighs the credible evidence against the association.

The Secretary would make his decisions based on reports and recommendations received from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), with whom he would be required to enter into a contract for a comprehensive review of the scientific evidence pertaining to herbicide exposure, as well as all other valid medical and scientific information and analyses available to the Secretary. The Secretary would be required to make a determination with respect to each disease entity covered in each NAS report within 60 days after receiving the report and, if a presumption is granted, the Secretary would be required to publish proposed regulations within 60 days thereafter. He would have an additional 60 days to issue final regulations. The Secretary would be empowered to remove diseases from such regulations if, in the future, it is determined that a presumption is not warranted; veterans or survivors receiving compensation or DIC would not be affected by any such removal.

Section 3 requires the Secretary, within two months after the enactment of this Act, to seek to enter into an agreement with the NAS to review the scientific evidence and to make periodic reports to the Secretary. This section also provides that the NAS reports shall include determinations with respect to each disease considered of whether (1) a statistical association with herbicide exposure exists, (2) the increased risk of the disease among those who were exposed while in Vietnam, and (3) whether a plausible biological mechanism exists or whether there is evidence of a causal relationship between herbicide exposure and the disease. The NAS would transmit its first report within 18 months from the date of enactment of the Act. The NAS would also make recommendations concerning the need, if any, for additional scientific studies to resolve areas of continuing scientific uncertainty and include these recommendations in its reports.

Section 4 would expand the Secretary's outreach activities required under Pub. L. No. 100-887 and require that updated information be provided on an annual basis to affected Vietnam-era veterans.

Section 5 would extend health care eligibility for veterans who suffer from disabilities alleged to be related to herbicide exposure or ionizing radiation exposure until December 31, 1993.

Section 6 would require the Secretary to compile and analyze clinical data obtained by the VA in connection with examinations and treatment furnished to veterans suffering from herbicide related disabilities and to report to the Committees on Veterans Affairs on an annual basis. This requirement would be subject to funding and would not take effect until after the Secretary has received a report from the NAS which contains its recommendation as to the feasibility or scientific value of such action.

Section 7 would require the Secretary to establish and maintain a system for the collection and storage of blood and tissue samples received from veterans who served in Vietnam. This requirement is also subject to the availability of funding and also would not take effect until after the Secretary received a report from the NAS as described in section 6.

Section 8 would require the Secretary to establish, in consultation with the NAS, a program to provide for the conduct of studies of the feasibility of conducting additional scientific research on health hazards resulting from dioxin exposure, exposure to toxic agents in herbicides in Vietnam, or health hazards resulting from Vietnam service. Again, the conduct of such a program would be subject to available funding and would have the same effective date provisions as in section 6 and 7.

Section 9 would require the Secretary to test the blood of any veteran who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam era who is eligible for health care from the Department under section 610(e) of title 38 or who has filed a claim for disability compensation for a disability alleged to be related to herbicide exposure to ascertain the level of TCDD which may be present in the veteran's body. This section is also subject to available funding and has the same effective date provisions as the above sections.

Section 10 would make conforming amendments to Public Law 98-542 to change the mission and makeup of the Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards, to limit it to considerations regarding ionizing radiation only.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Mexico for what he said.

Mr. Speaker, we are planning on bringing up the agent orange issue next week. It is not included in this legislation. This is a clean COLA bill of 5.4 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. RAHALL].

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to voice my strong support for H.R. 3, which would provide for a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment for veterans with service-connected disabilities. The failure by the Congress to pass this COLA last year was a slap in the face to those who have sacrificed so much for their country.

For the past several months my office has been swamped by letters and phone calls from individuals outraged by our inability to pass this veterans' COLA. Many of these people are not even veterans. Instead they are people concerned with the message that Congress, by our inaction, has sent to those troops stationed overseas as a part of Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

The events of the past several days have brought forth an emotional outpouring of support for the men and women in the Persian Gulf. All Americans are proud of our troops. My friends it is time for Congress to send a clear message to those who are serving and those who have already served their Nation that they will not be forgotten.

I strongly support the passage of H.R. 3, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues, once again to support H.R. 3. I also would like to commend the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], chairman of the committee, for his tireless effort not only for H.R. 3 but in behalf of the veterans throughout the entire year.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the veterans' com-

pensation cost-of-living adjustment bill. I would like to thank and commend Chairman MONTGOMERY and the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Mr. STUMP, for their vigorous efforts on behalf of this bill and for expeditiously bringing this legislation to the floor. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this bill.

The bill before us today provides a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment retroactively for veterans with service-connected disabilities, and compensation for the dependents of veterans who die as a result of service-connected injuries. Although the cost-of-living adjustment itself was not a controversial issue, other issues incorporated into the bill prohibited passage before the 101st Congress adjourned. I do believe that those issues should be addressed and will support them when they are brought to the floor for consideration. However, I am pleased that this bill has quickly made its way through the 102d Congress, and that we will give equal consideration to the agent orange issue as is certainly appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a very busy past couple of weeks. We passed a resolution authorizing the President to wage a war against the aggressive action of Iraq's Saddam Hussein and we passed a resolution in support of the over half a million American troops whose lives and limbs are on the line in an effort to force Iraqi armed forces from occupied Kuwait. This bill once again affirms our strong support of our courageous men and women serving in the conflict in the Middle East and in recognition, however meager, of the debt we owe them. It is for these reasons that I strongly support H.R. 3 and urge all of my colleagues to support this important and vital legislation.

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 3, which will give disabled veterans a sorely needed cost-of-living increase. As a cosponsor of this measure, I know how critical it is to disabled veterans.

Disabled veterans represent the great tradition of our Nation. These dedicated veterans served heroically during wartime, and it is the privilege of our country to be able to assist these individuals. All of us would agree that these disabled veterans need and deserve a cost-of-living increase, and it was unfortunate that this COLA was bogged down in a separate dispute last year.

It is my understanding that the dispute which held up the cost-of-living increase at the end of last year's session has been resolved. The House last year passed legislation awarding important new benefits to disabled veterans, and through the efforts of the chairman of the House Veterans Committee, the ranking minority member, and the other members of that committee we will see legislation aimed at awarding these benefits to disabled veterans brought to the floor of the House in just a few days.

We have a new generation of American soldiers honorably serving their Nation today in the Persian Gulf. At this critical time, we must not forget those who have served in previous conflicts. Disabled veterans in Pennsylvania and all across the country, who have our everlasting gratitude for their sacrifices, will now have the cost-of-living increase which they so richly deserve.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to add my support today for H.R. 3—meaning a

5.4-percent cost-of-living increase for our 2.5 million veterans who retired with service-connected disabilities. I was proud to cosponsor this bill. I commend SONNY MONTGOMERY and BOB STUMP for their efforts to bring it to the floor.

This clearly is not a controversial bill. Last year, we authorized funds for the COLA, yet due to difficulties involving the Senate, we weren't able to obtain final approval before adjournment. In a nutshell, we ran out of time. Today, we have the opportunity to finish the job started last year.

I don't think it is an understatement to say that now more than ever it's important to remember the sacrifices our veterans have made for their country. Those who risk their lives represent the very best of our country has to offer. I appreciate this opportunity to thank them for their sacrifices.

Mr. HUTTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3. This measure will rightfully grant a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment for our service-connected disabled veterans. The House approved this measure last session, but the Senate did not. We were remiss by not passing the COLA prior to the first of the year. We should not delay benefits to those who suffered injuries while serving our country. Especially in this time of armed conflict, we cannot forget the people who have fought to make this Nation great. I'm glad that other Government beneficiaries received a much needed increase in pensions, but as I've stated so many times before, we must treat everyone equally. Now is the time to correct the mistake that Congress made during the last year. I urge everyone to join me in support of H.R. 3.

Mr. LEWIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, legislation to provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment to our nation's disabled veterans.

In my opinion, this COLA is due, and should not have been tied to other issues of a more controversial nature. It is simply not fair for our disabled veterans to wait, year after year, while political issues determine the fate of their cost-of-living adjustment.

As a veteran myself, I have a sincere appreciation of our disabled veterans and the sacrifices they have made for our country. These men and women were willing to sacrifice themselves for the security of America. The least we can do is allow them to be secure in the knowledge that their COLA's will be forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, we must remedy this unfortunate situation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3, and give disabled veterans their full 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment.

Mr. ANNUNZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3, a bill that I have cosponsored. This legislation will provide our disabled veterans with a modest, cost-of-living increase in benefits.

Disabled veterans will receive their benefits retroactively to January 1 of this year.

Regrettably, the Congress last year neglected to approve COLA increases for disabled veterans. At that time, other Federal aid recipients, such as Social Security beneficiaries, did receive COLA raises. We must now correct this oversight and give the disabled veterans their raise.

The COLA increase will provide disabled veterans with a 5.4-percent increase in bene-

fits. The extra money will help them keep up with inflation.

Given the sacrifices these brave men and women have made in defense of our country, this increase is more than justified.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3.

Mr. LAGOMARSINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3, the retroactive cost-of-living adjustment for America's disabled veterans and their families. I commend my colleague, the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for his swift action in bringing this important legislation before the House.

As a veteran myself, I lament the fact that America's disabled veterans have unfortunately become innocent pawns in an increasingly dirty match of political gamesmanship. This injustice is unwarranted. Last year when Congress gave a 5.4-percent COLA to all other retirees, disabled veterans were left out due to the actions of one Member of Congress. I supported a COLA for disabled veterans in the 101st Congress as I do today.

When the call came to serve their country, Americans responded and gave their all—many of these men and women never regained the physical abilities they once possessed. Today, when these same individuals need our support, it is not the time to haggle over issues that are of a separate and more complex nature. The agent orange issue needs to be addressed by this Congress. However, it should be addressed separately and in the proper venue. Legislative and political irresponsibility should not be added to the burden that these men and women already bear.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this crucial legislation which will improve the lives of the more than 2 million disabled American veterans.

Mr. MICHEL. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Chairman SONNY MONTGOMERY and ranking Republican BOB STUMP for bringing H.R. 3 to the floor so quickly.

I was pleased to join the chairman and others as an original cosponsor of the bill.

Regrettably, this bill did not pass last session, but with the determined action of our Veterans' Committee, we are now able to provide our veterans the cost-of-living increase they so richly deserve.

H.R. 3 will provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment, retroactive to January 1, 1991, for veterans with service-connected disabilities and for survivors of certain disabled veterans.

Since the cost of this bill is already included in the baseline, it will not require further budgetary considerations.

The current situation in the Persian Gulf makes passage of H.R. 3 especially important. As we witness the great courage of our troops today, we remember the great sacrifices and great courage of our veterans.

Passing this COLA bill is a small, yet significant, way to commemorate the contributions of our veterans in the past and to celebrate the bravery of our soldiers today.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the important bill.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Congressman SONNY MONTGOMERY, and the ranking minority member,

Congressman BOB STUMP, have brought this bill to the floor of the House on the first official day of the 102d Congress. As an original cosponsor of this important legislation, I join with the veterans of the Ninth District of Ohio and other veterans in thanking them for their efforts.

During this time when hundreds of thousands of brave men and women are serving our Nation so proudly in the Persian Gulf, passage of this legislation sends a signal that our Nation will defend the futures of those who defended our futures during times of international crisis.

Today we are ensuring that over 2 million service-disabled veterans and their dependents will finally receive the 5.4 percent COLA that was due to them on January 1. I am especially pleased that the payment will be retroactive—and will be in the March paychecks of these individuals.

I am also pleased that the controversy that held up final passage of the COLA legislation in the final hours of the 101st Congress has also been addressed. Under the compromise, administrative decisions by the VA to compensate Vietnam veterans for non-Hodgkins lymphoma and soft-tissue sarcoma would now become law. Future presumptions of service-connected illnesses may be added to the list of compensable service-connected illnesses by the Secretary after considering recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences.

Having served for years as a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know first hand about the tragic stories of many of these veterans and their urgent need for compensation and quality health care. By allowing the National Academy of Sciences—a non-governmental entity—to make recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs on whether to add certain presumptions to the list of illnesses, we have taken an important step in removing politics from the process.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3, legislation to rectify a mistake by providing the 1991 service-connected disability benefits cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] for our Nation's 2 million disabled veterans. As an original cosponsor, I am pleased that my colleagues have joined me to make sure that disabled veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

There are over 40,000 disabled veterans in Wisconsin who rely on this COLA, and in northeast Wisconsin, 5,000 veterans qualify for benefits under programs affected by the COLA. H.R. 3 will boost by \$412 million the total money available for our Nation's disabled veterans and their families. Passage of the COLA means that they can afford the basic necessities.

These veterans are our Nation's most deserving heroes. They answered their Nation's call and made the sacrifices that were asked of them. In return, America promised to provide for their special needs and those of their families. Congress must make sure that the promise made to America's disabled veterans is kept.

Last year, I voted for the legislation that provided the COLA for America's disabled veterans. The adjustment was part of an omnibus veterans measure with provisions on agent orange, health care, housing, employment, and education. The package also contained language to boost funding for veterans hospi-

tal staffing and provide care for those suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder [PTSD].

Although this package passed the House on October 15, 1990, it was delayed in the Senate by debate on the agent orange provisions. In the final hours of Congress, a clean COLA bill, minus the other provisions, was brought up again in the House. But one Member, who insisted the COLA include the agent orange provisions, opposed our effort, thus derailing the COLA legislation.

I know that the few in Congress who blocked the COLA did so to focus attention on the issue of agent orange. While I agree that the agent orange issue must be resolved, benefits for our Nation's disabled veterans should not be held hostage to that issue. It was wrong to deny the COLA to America's disabled veterans. We must insist, and we will insist, that America keep its promise to the disabled veterans.

Today, over 400,000 Americans stand ready in Saudi Arabia to defend our Nation's principles. Like the soldiers who served before them, these soldiers are ready to make the sacrifices our Nation asks of them.

Tomorrow, these soldiers will be veterans. Like the veterans today, they will expect America to keep its promise to provide for their needs and the needs of their families. Congress must do the right thing. We must pass this COLA and show that we will follow through on the promise made to veterans 125 years ago when Abraham Lincoln said that America will "care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of this bill, I am proud to rise in strong support of the Nation's veterans and their families. With each news break of the war in the Middle East we are reminded of the sacrifices veterans have made for our great Nation.

In simple justice, the Nation owes no less to veterans and their families who have given so much in defense of the independence and liberties that are the birthright of all Americans.

The cost-of-living adjustment in this legislation helps insure fair treatment for eligible veterans and family members who have endured financial loss due to disabilities or death related to military service.

As of December, there were 25,923 veterans in Arkansas who were receiving service-connected disability compensation. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the average monthly payment to these veterans was \$493.

In addition, there were 5,173 Arkansans receiving dependency and indemnity compensation payments as members of families of veterans who had service-connected disabilities.

Monthly payments to Arkansas service-connected veterans and eligible family members in December totaled \$15.9 million.

This bill provides for a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment in compensation payments to veterans with service-connected disabilities and in dependency and indemnity compensation.

This legislation before us is intended to help America fulfill its commitment to the men and women who accepted the responsibility of military service in order to protect the freedoms guaranteed to all Americans.

I urge its swift passage by this Congress.

Mr. SYNAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3, a bill to provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] in compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and their dependents.

As a cosponsor of this measure, I am pleased with the broad base of bipartisan support for a COLA that would benefit more than 2 million veterans with service-connected disabilities, as well as 272,000 widows and 41,000 children of veterans who died of service-related injuries.

Even today, American servicemen and servicewomen stand vigil in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere around the world to defend human rights from oppression. We once made great strides in squaring our debt to those who have served this Nation faithfully and honorably. In recent years this has been a struggle. When budget resources are divided, veterans deserve a special priority and consideration. It is my sincere hope that the passage of this measure will be the 102d Congress' first step in safeguarding veterans' benefits and services across the board.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I commend SONNY MONTGOMERY, chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for his sponsorship of H.R. 3. The veterans of Oklahoma know that Chairman MONTGOMERY is a staunch advocate for our Nation's veterans, whose sacrifices secured freedom for all Americans.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support passage of H.R. 3 which provides for a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] for veterans with service-connected disabilities.

As much as I want to see agent orange victims compensated, I do not believe it is right to pursue this goal at the expense of other disabled veterans. As one veteran from my district wrote to me:

I am a disabled World War II veteran and I think it is very unfair to shelve the 5.4-percent COLA increase. Most of us are elderly and in poor health. Also we are on a fixed income and need the increase.

In restoring the disability COLA, retroactive to January 1, we are doing what's right for the nearly 2.1 million disabled veterans who are counting on this action. But I hope that the House and Senate will also move expeditiously to revisit the agent orange issue and do what's right for the veterans suffering from exposure to this herbicide.

Mr. McMILLEN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3, the veterans compensation COLA bill. This legislation will provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] in compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities as well as, compensation for dependents of veterans who died serving their country. A bill very similar to this legislation was passed by this House in the 101st Congress, but was not acted upon by the other body.

While I support this legislation, I am aware that it is overdue. Many veterans' organizations from the State of Maryland have contacted me expressing their disappointment that Congress failed to pass this important COLA when it should have been done—last October. I agree, there is no excuse. There are many individuals who's only source of income comes from this entitlement. A cost-of-living adjustment is not a bonus for these individuals, it is a necessity.

Certainly all of us here have been sensitized to the situation of disabled veterans due to the ongoing situation in the Persian Gulf. It is difficult to miss the irony that as this country sends more men into harms way, we fail to take care of those who have gone this way in the past and paid such heavy price.

However, I am pleased to see that the author of this legislation, my colleague Chairman MONTGOMERY, made sure that while the actions of this Congress may be late, no disabled veteran will be penalized for our delay. This legislation is designed to provide retroactive compensation effective from January 1, 1991, thereby ensuring that no veteran will lose compensation benefits. I commend the chairman for his action in introducing this legislation and for his obvious concern for this Nation's veterans.

I would like to finish my remarks by noting that the original COLA legislation passed by this House last October did include certain agent orange provisions which are lacking in this bill. It is my understanding that a separate piece of legislation will be brought to the floor in the near future to address the agent orange issue. While I support this legislation, I do believe that the agent orange issue must be considered as soon as possible.

I voted in favor of the agent orange provision in the original COLA legislation and I plan to support such provision in a separate bill. I cannot, however, support holding entitled compensation for disabled veterans hostage for the benefit of another, albeit equally deserving, group of disabled veterans.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. Our disabled veterans have waited long enough.

Mr. KYL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3, the veterans compensation COLA. Once again, we are given the chance to uphold our commitment to our disabled veterans, their widows and children by approving a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment. Let us not be negligent. We cannot afford to become distracted and embroiled in other unrelated political issues that led to the failure of the prior COLA bill.

We have an obligation to those veterans and their families who have made supreme sacrifices for their country. How can we justify to our veterans that we approved COLAs for Social Security recipients and Federal employees while withholding a COLA from those men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our freedom and democracy? What message are we sending to our troops currently serving our country in the Persian Gulf? Failure to approve this measure would constitute an egregious breach of faith with our veterans and their families.

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to rise today in support of our country's disabled veterans, those who so nobly risked their lives to protect and preserve this great country.

The first bill I introduced this Congress was one to provide service-connected disabled veterans and their survivors with a full 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] for 1991. It is essential that we meet our obligations to our veterans and acknowledge their courageous service to the Nation.

As my colleagues know, although legislation for our Nation's disabled veterans passed the House last year, it unfortunately never became law. This unconscionable situation re-

sulted because the other body failed to approve last year's House-passed bill. The House is therefore now taking swift action to not only correct this situation, but, as my bill proposed, to also make the 5.4-percent COLA retroactive to January 1, 1991, ensuring fairness to veterans and their families.

I have had the opportunity to sit on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I am pleased, but not surprised, to see the quick action taken by Chairman MONTGOMERY and the full committee on this important legislation. As I have noted, it provides the full 5.4-percent COLA to which disabled veterans and their survivors are entitled, and makes the provision of this COLA retroactive to January 1, 1991, the date the COLA should have gone into effect.

I sincerely hope the Senate passes this legislation expeditiously so that it can be signed into law by the President. The Congress must never again let the vital needs of our disabled veterans fall prey to political infighting, endangering their health and well-being. Disabled veterans have fought unselfishly and courageously to defend our country, and the Congress must always remember their sacrifices and meet its responsibilities to provide the benefits to which they are unquestionably entitled.

Mrs. LOWEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3, legislation to provide a cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] for our Nation's veterans who suffer from service-connected disabilities. I am proud to be a cosponsor and wholeheartedly support this urgently needed increase in benefits for those who have literally put their lives on the line for our country.

In this time of conflict, Congress more than ever should be sensitive in showing its strong support of our Nation's veterans. As we watch our troops in battle today, we are reminded of the hardships and brutality endured by many men and women during past military conflicts. Although we can never fully compensate veterans for these hardships, we must act to ensure that veterans' benefits are fair and appropriate. This means that veterans must receive a full cost-of-living increase just as beneficiaries of other Federal programs do. This is the very least to which our veterans are entitled.

I proudly support H.R. 3 because it will not only treat current veterans fairly, but also send a message to our troops abroad that in the years to come, after the hardships of this conflict are over, we will not forget the bravery and courage they display today. This bill follows through on our Nation's commitment to veterans, and I urge all of my colleagues to join in strong support.

Mr. McGRATH. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my strong support for H.R. 3, a bill providing a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] in compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities, and dependency and indemnity [DIC] compensation for dependents of veterans who die of service-connected causes.

I want to thank the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Representative SONNY MONTGOMERY, for his commitment to make this bill a priority in the 102d Congress. I also applaud the chairman and members of the committee for coming to a compromise on agent orange benefits, the contentious issue

that divided the Congress last year and held up the COLA legislation.

It is truly unfortunate that because of a procedural motion, we failed to pass this bill last month. While I support enhancing benefits to our veterans who suffer from effects of the herbicide agent orange, we cannot hold our most deserving veterans hostage on account of political squabbles.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 3 and support the Veterans' Affairs Committee agent orange compromise. We must continue to work to ensure that agent orange victims, as well as disabled veterans and their dependents, receive proper care and compensation.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in favor of H.R. 3, the veterans' COLA bill, which I have cosponsored.

As young American men and women are bravely fighting in the Persian Gulf, it is only right that this Congress reconfirms its commitment to our veterans—past, present, and future.

As a former staff aide to the most decorated veteran to even serve in Congress, the late Otis E. "Tiger" Teague, I believe no single group in America deserves greater gratitude than our veterans.

When American soldiers defend us in wartime, we have an obligation, a moral responsibility, to support them in peacetime.

I commend Chairman MONTGOMERY for his leadership in passing this COLA bill last year in the House and for his perseverance in seeing that our veterans will receive this year this much deserved COLA benefits.

Veterans have fought for us. It is our time to fight for them.

Ms. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3, the veterans' compensation cost-of-living adjustment [COLA]. It is terribly unfair that veterans have been denied a basic benefit in this time of economic uncertainty.

Our veterans, brave men and women who have served our Nation in the Armed Forces, made tremendous sacrifices to protect our country. It is imperative that we restore full benefits to persons who rely on those benefits for their economic well-being and security.

H.R. 3 would enact a standard 5.4-percent COLA retroactive to January 1 of this year. We owe so much to our veterans. Immediate passage of this legislation will reaffirm our commitment to those persons who have made grave sacrifices to protect the United States and its allies.

In addition, a COLA for veterans will reassure our active duty personnel, like the servicemen and servicewomen in the Persian Gulf, that our commitment to their well-being and the well-being of their families will not falter when they need it most. Now is not the time for the Federal Government to backpedal on its responsibility to veterans. We must do everything possible to boost the morale of our troops throughout the world.

I join with many of my colleagues who believe that Congress has a responsibility to veterans with disabilities. We must pass H.R. 3 immediately. Our veterans have sacrificed more than enough for our Nation. We must not ask them to do without the benefits they are entitled to receive.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3, legislation to provide a retroactive cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] for veterans in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, last year the House approved a 5.4-percent increase in disability compensation for veterans. However, the Senate failed to act on that legislation before Congress adjourned, and veterans are now the only Federal beneficiaries without COLA's.

Our veterans deserve better. These are the men and women who served their country in its time of need. We must act now to correct this error and provide just compensation for veterans and their dependents.

H.R. 3 will do just that. This legislation will provide a 5.4-percent COLA, retroactive to January 1, for the 2.2 million veterans who receive compensation benefits for their service-connected injuries and disabilities.

That COLA will also apply to dependency and indemnity compensation [DIC] paid to 300,000 widows and children of veterans who have died of service-connected causes.

Mr. Speaker, over 200 of my colleagues have joined me in cosponsoring this important legislation. I urge the rest of the House to unite with us to support H.R. 3.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my support for H.R. 3, increasing the rates of disability compensation for Veterans.

Many of you recall that in the 101st Congress we did not vote on a cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] for disabled veterans. This inaction left this Nation's 2.5 million service-connected disabled veterans and their surviving families without a COLA.

I have also believed that all our Nation's retirees should be treated equitably with regards to cost-of-living increases. An omission of COLA's for one segment of retirees is completely unfair.

As a disabled veteran of Cherry Hill, NJ, stated in a letter to me, "We're elderly and on fixed incomes. Disabled vets see the cost of food, housing, and health care go up just as the Social Security recipients do."

I applaud the efforts of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to move this bill for a House vote at the first opportunity in the 102d Congress.

A cost-of-living adjustment for service-connected disabled veterans was certainly a top priority of my 1991 agenda. I maintained a correspondence with the chairman of the Veterans' Committee and now I am glad to see the fruits of this effort.

I am pleased that I have the opportunity to vote today on a retroactive 5.4-percent COLA for service-connected disability veterans and their surviving families. My colleagues, I stand before you to urge you to join me in voting "yes" to grant this cost-of-living adjustment—a necessary shield against inflation.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of H.R. 3, I would like to thank the chairman and ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for keeping their pledge to bring this important issue to the floor bright and early.

It is a matter of fundamental fairness that today we pass this legislation to provide a 5.4-percent COLA for our disabled veterans and the widows and children of those who died of their disabilities. And it is only right that this COLA be made retroactive to January 1.

Since October, I have heard veterans across the State of Maine express their dismay and frustration that Congress seemed to have forgotten them. After all, they served their country in its time of need, and they wanted to know what had happened to this

country's promise to be there for them in return. That was a legitimate question.

As H.R. 3 is one of the first pieces of legislation to be adopted by the 102d Congress, I hope that this will send a message to our 2.2 million disabled veterans that the Congress and the Nation stand by them. The importance placed on providing the COLA is further evidenced by the support for the bill, which is cosponsored by fully two-thirds of the House.

The promises made the men and women who have served us in the past must be kept. I hope today's actions signal a renewed commitment to our veterans. We will also be sending a message to our troops in the Persian Gulf that their service will not be forgotten.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, legislation to provide disabled veterans with a 5.4-cost-of-living adjustment in their monthly disability checks.

Similar legislation failed to pass at the very end of last session because the bill also contained some controversial provisions concerning compensation for certain veterans believed to have been exposed to agent orange. As a result, service-wounded veterans have not received the cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] that Social Security beneficiaries have already received.

Since last session, the cost-of-living adjustment and the agent orange issues have been dealt with individually. They are now under consideration in separate legislation, enabling H.R. 3 to be considered on its own merits. Pending passage of H.R. 3 in the House, it is intended that the Senate will take up the bill immediately. The increase would then appear in veterans' March disability checks, retroactive to January 1.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this legislation has advanced to the floor so quickly this session but would like to emphasize that disabled veterans have been waiting for this increase and are aware that others have received a COLA and they have not. These veterans are the men and women who were injured during service for our country. They have made sacrifices on our behalf and should not have to wait for an appropriate disability payment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in my strong support for this legislation and grand disabled veterans the cost-of-living adjustment they are owed. This increase is past due.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] for the words he has said today and other Members of the Congress.

We are very proud that we do have this COLA up. It will go over to the Senate and to the President, and I hope that there will be fast action on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I hold up the names of the 290 Members who have cosponsored H.R. 3, the COLA bill, the 5.4-percent compensation increase.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3.

The question was taken.

Mr. HAMMERSCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONDEMNING RECENT USE OF SOVIET MILITARY FORCE IN THE BALTIC STATES

Mr. FASCELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 40) condemning the recent use of Soviet military force in the Baltic States, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 40

Whereas the United States has strongly supported progress toward democracy in the Soviet Union and, consistent with this objective, the policies of perestroika and glasnost;

Whereas the full range of United States-Soviet bilateral relations has improved in recognition of democratic reform in the Soviet Union;

Whereas for the past 50 years the United States has refused to recognize the forcible annexation of the Baltic states and has long supported the principle of self-determination for the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia;

Whereas the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia each have established democratically-elected governments which have chosen to exercise their right of self-determination;

Whereas Soviet troops have sought to reimpose Soviet control in place of these democratically elected governments and President Gorbachev has threatened direct presidential rule;

Whereas Soviet troops have recently surrounded and occupied government buildings and other public facilities in the Baltic states as part of an attempt to intimidate the Baltic people and governments and to assert Soviet control;

Whereas Soviet forces opened fire on unarmed protesters and local militia in Lithuania and Latvia resulting in at least 20 deaths and at least 150 injuries;

Whereas these actions violate the human rights of the people of the Baltic states and represent a troubling reversal of progress toward democracy in the Soviet Union; and

Whereas the Soviet actions in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are in direct violation of the Helsinki Final Act, the United Nations Charter, and other international documents guaranteeing human rights and the self-determination of all peoples: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) condemns the recent brutal violence by Soviet forces in Lithuania and Latvia;

(2) calls in President Gorbachev to cease immediately the use of force against the

amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The Chair will announce that this is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 0, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 13]

YEAS—415

Abercrombie	Dickinson	Hunter
Ackerman	Dicks	Hutto
Alexander	Dingell	Hyde
Allard	Dixon	Inhofe
Anderson	Donnelly	Ireland
Andrews (ME)	Dooley	James
Andrews (NJ)	Doolittle	Jefferson
Andrews (TX)	Dorgan (CA)	Jenkins
Annunzio	Dorman (ND)	Johnson (CT)
Anthony	Downey	Johnson (SD)
Applegate	Dreier	Johnston
Archer	Duncan	Jones (GA)
Armedy	Durbin	Jones (NC)
Aspin	Dwyer	Jontz
Atkins	Early	Kanjorski
AuCoin	Eckart	Kaptur
Bacchus	Edwards (CA)	Kasich
Baker	Edwards (OK)	Kennedy
Ballenger	Edwards (TX)	Kennelly
Barnard	Emerson	Kildee
Barrett	Engel	Kleczka
Bartlett	English	Klug
Barton	Erdreich	Kolbe
Bateman	Espy	Kotler
Bellenson	Evans	Kopetski
Bennett	Fascell	Kostmayer
Bentley	Fawell	Kyl
Bereuter	Fazio	LaFalce
Berman	Feighan	Lagomarsino
Bevill	Fields	Lancaster
Billbray	Fish	Lantos
Bilirakis	Flake	LaRocco
Billiey	Foglietta	Laughlin
Boehlert	Ford (MI)	Leach
Boehner	Frank (MA)	Lehman (CA)
Bonior	Franks (CT)	Lehman (FL)
Borski	Frost	Lent
Boucher	Gallegly	Levin (MD)
Boxer	Gallo	Lewis (CA)
Brewster	Gaydos	Lewis (FL)
Brooks	Gejdenson	Lewis (GA)
Broomfield	Gekas	Lightfoot
Browder	Gephardt	Lipinski
Brown	Geren	Livingston
Bruce	Gibbons	Lloyd
Bryant	Gilchrest	Long
Bunning	Gillmor	Lowery (CA)
Burton	Gilman	Lowey (NY)
Bustamante	Gingrich	Luken
Byron	Glickman	Machtley
Callahan	Gonzalez	Madigan
Camp	Goodling	Manton
Campbell (CA)	Gordon	Markey
Cardin	Goss	Marlenee
Carper	Gradison	Martin
Carr	Grandy	Martinez
Chandler	Gray	Mavroules
Chapman	Green	Mazzoli
Clay	Guarini	McColum
Clement	Gunderson	McCreery
Clinger	Hall (OH)	McCurdy
Coble	Hall (TX)	McDade
Coleman (MO)	Hamilton	McDermott
Coleman (TX)	Hammerschmidt	McGrath
Collins (IL)	Hancock	McHugh
Collins (MI)	Hansen	McMillan (NC)
Combest	Harris	McMillen (MD)
Condit	Hastert	McNulty
Conte	Hatcher	Meyers
Conyers	Hayes (IL)	Mfume
Cooper	Hefley	Michel
Costello	Hefner	Miller (CA)
Coughlin	Henry	Miller (OH)
Cox (CA)	Herger	Miller (WA)
Cox (IL)	Hertel	Mineta
Coyne	Hogland	Mink
Cramer	Hobson	Moakley
Crane	Hochbrueckner	Molinar
Cunningham	Holloway	Mollohan
Dannemeyer	Hopkins	Montgomery
Darden	Horn	Moody
Davis	Horton	Moorhead
DeFazio	Houghton	Moran
DeLauro	Hoyer	Moretta
DeLay	Hubbard	Morrison
Dellums	Huckaby	Mrazek
Derrick	Hughes	Murphy

Martha	Roe	Stenholm
Myers	Roemer	Stokes
Nagle	Rogers	Studds
Natcher	Rohrabacher	Stump
Neal (MA)	Roe-Lehtinen	Sundquist
Neal (NC)	Roe	Swett
Nichols	Rostenkowski	Swift
Nourak	Roth	Synar
Nussle	Roukema	Tafton
Oakar	Rowland	Tanner
Oberstar	Russo	Tauzin
Obey	Sabo	Taylor (MS)
Ortiz	Sanders	Taylor (NC)
Orton	Sangmeister	Thomas (CA)
Owens (NY)	Santoruma	Thomas (GA)
Owens (UT)	Sarpanus	Thomas (WY)
Oxley	Savage	Thornton
Packard	Sawyer	Torricelli
Pallone	Saxton	Towns
Panetta	Schaefer	Traffant
Parker	Scheuer	Traxler
Patterson	Schiff	Unsoeld
Paxon	Schroeder	Upton
Payne (NJ)	Schulze	Valentine
Pease	Schumer	Vander Jagt
Pelosi	Sensenbrenner	Vento
Penney	Serrano	Visclosky
Perkins	Sharp	Volkmer
Peterson (FL)	Shaw	Vucanovich
Peterson (MN)	Shays	Walker
Petri	Shuster	Walsh
Pickett	Sikorski	Washington
Pickle	Siskis	Waters
Porter	Skaggs	Waxman
Poshard	Skeen	Weber
Price	Skelton	Weldon
Purse	Slattery	Wheat
Quillen	Slaughter (NY)	Whitten
Rahall	Slaughter (VA)	Williams
Ramstad	Smith (FL)	Wilson
Rangel	Smith (IA)	Wolf
Ravenel	Smith (NJ)	Wolpe
Ray	Smith (OR)	Wyden
Reed	Smith (TX)	Wylie
Regula	Solarz	Yates
Rhodes	Solomon	Yatron
Richardson	Spence	Young (AK)
Ridge	Spratt	Young (FL)
Riggs	Staggers	Zeliff
Rinaldo	Stallings	Zimmer
Ritter	Stark	
Roberts	Stearns	

vote be shown on the RECORD following the regular vote.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS OF 1991

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 421, nays 0, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 14]

YEAS—421

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—19

Campbell (CO)	Matsui	Snowe
de la Garza	McCandless	Torres
Dymally	McCloskey	Udall
Ford (TN)	McEwen	Weiss
Hayes (LA)	Olin	Wise
Jacobs	Payne (VA)	
Levine (CA)	Roybal	

Abercrombie	Conyers	Goodling
Ackerman	Cooper	Gordon
Alexander	Costello	Goss
Allard	Coughlin	Gradison
Anderson	Cox (CA)	Grandy
Andrews (ME)	Cox (IL)	Gray
Andrews (NJ)	Coyne	Green
Andrews (TX)	Cramer	Guarini
Annunzio	Crane	Gunderson
Anthony	Cunningham	Hall (OH)
Applegate	Dannemeyer	Hall (TX)
Archer	Darden	Hamilton
Armedy	Davis	Hammerschmidt
Aspin	DeFazio	Hancock
Atkins	DeLauro	Hansen
AuCoin	DeLay	Harris
Bacchus	Dellums	Hastert
Baker	Derrick	Hatcher
Ballenger	Dickinson	Hayes (IL)
Barnard	Dicks	Hefley
Barrett	Dingell	Hefner
Bartlett	Dixon	Henry
Barton	Donnelly	Herger
Bateman	Dooley	Hertel
Bellenson	Doolittle	Hogland
Bennett	Dorgan (ND)	Hobson
Bentley	Dorman (CA)	Hochbrueckner
Bereuter	Downey	Holloway
Berman	Dreier	Hopkins
Bevill	Duncan	Horn
Billbray	Durbin	Horton
Bilirakis	Dwyer	Houghton
Billiey	Early	Hoyer
Boehlert	Eckart	Hubbard
Boehner	Edwards (CA)	Huckaby
Bonior	Edwards (OK)	Hughes
Borski	Edwards (TX)	Hunter
Boucher	Emerson	Hutto
Boxer	Engel	Hyde
Brewster	English	Inhofe
Brooks	Erdreich	Ireland
Broomfield	Espy	Jacobs
Browder	Evans	James
Brown	Fascell	Jefferson
Bruce	Fawell	Jenkins
Bryant	Fazio	Johnson (CT)
Bunning	Feighan	Johnson (SD)
Burton	Fields	Johnston
Bustamante	Fish	Jones (GA)
Byron	Flake	Jones (NC)
Callahan	Foglietta	Jontz
Camp	Ford (MI)	Kanjorski
Campbell (CA)	Frank (MA)	Kaptur
Cardin	Franks (CT)	Kasich
Carper	Frost	Kennedy
Carr	Gallegly	Kennelly
Chandler	Gallo	Kildee
Chapman	Gaydos	Kleczka
Clay	Gejdenson	Klug
Clement	Gekas	Kolbe
Clinger	Gephardt	Kotler
Coble	Geren	Kopetski
Coleman (MO)	Gibbons	Kostmayer
Coleman (TX)	Gilchrest	Kyl
Collins (IL)	Gillmor	LaFalce
Collins (MI)	Gilman	Lagomarsino
Combest	Gingrich	Lancaster
Condit	Glickman	Lantos
Conte	Gonzalez	LaRocco

□ 1602

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof), the rules were suspended and the bill as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, on a previous vote, rollcall 13, H.R. 4, extension of the tax deadline for people serving in the Persian Gulf, I was inadvertently detained and entered the Chamber seconds after the vote closed. Had I been present I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. McCANDLESS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 13, dealing with H.R. 4, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been here, I would have voted "aye" on that measure and I ask that my

CONDEMNING RECENT USE OF SOVIET MILITARY FORCE IN THE BALTIC STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MAZZOLI). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 40, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FASCELL] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 40, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This is the last 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 417, nays 0, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 15]

YEAS—417

Laughlin Owens (NY) Skaggs
Leach Owens (UT) Skeen
Lehman (CA) Oxley Skelton
Lehman (FL) Packard Slattery
Lent Pallone Slaughter (NY)
Levin (MI) Panetta Slaughter (VA)
Lewis (CA) Parker Smith (FL)
Lewis (FL) Patterson Smith (IA)
Lewis (GA) Paxon Smith (NJ)
Lightfoot Payne (NJ) Smith (OR)
Lipinski Payne (VA) Smith (TX)
Livingston Pease Solarz
Lloyd Pelosi Solomon
Long Penny Spence
Lowery (CA) Perkins Spratt
Lowey (NY) Peterson (FL) Staggers
Luken Peterson (MN) Stallings
Machtley Petri Stark
Madigan Pickett Stearns
Manton Pickle Stenholm
Markey Porter Stokes
Marlenee Poshard Studts
Martin Price Stump
Martinez Pursell Sundquist
Mavroules Quillen Swett
Mazzoli Rahall Swift
McCandless Ramstad Synar
McCloskey Rangel Tallon
McCollum Ravelle Tanner
McCrery Ray Tauzin
McCurdy Reed Taylor (MS)
McDade Regula Taylor (NC)
McDermott Rhodes Thomas (CA)
McGrath Richardson Thomas (GA)
McHugh Ridge Thomas (WY)
McMillan (NC) Riggs Thornton
McMillen (MD) Rinaldo Torricelli
McNulty Ritter Towns
Meyers Roberts Traficant
Mfume Roe Traxler
Michel Roemer Unsoeld
Miller (CA) Rogers Upton
Miller (OH) Rohrbacher Valentine
Miller (WA) Ros-Lehtinen Vander Jagt
Mineta Rose Vento
Mink Rostenkowski Visclosky
Moakley Roth Volkmer
Mollinari Roukema Vucanovich
Mollohan Rowland Walker
Montgomery Russo Walsh
Moody Sabo Washington
Moorhead Sanders Waters
Moran Sangmeister Waxman
Morella Santorum Weber
Morrison Sarpalius Weldon
Mrzacek Sawyer Whelan
Murphy Saxton Williams
Murtha Schaefer Willson
Myers Schaefer Wise
Nagle Scheuer Wolf
Natcher Schiff Wolpe
Neal (MA) Schroeder Wyden
Neal (NC) Schulze Wyden
Nichols Schumer Wylie
Nowak Sensenbrenner Yates
Nussle Serrano Yatron
Oakar Sharp Young (AK)
Oberstar Shaw Young (FL)
Obey Shays Zelliff
Olin Shuster Zimmar
Ortiz Sikorski
Orton Siskiy

Abercrombie Condit Gilman
Ackerman Conte Gingrich
Alexander Conyers Glickman
Allard Cooper Gonzalez
Anderson Costello Goodling
Andrews (ME) Coughlin Goss
Andrews (NJ) Cox (CA) Gradison
Andrews (TX) Cox (IL) Grandy
Annunzio Coyne Gray
Anthony Cramer Green
Applegate Crane Guarini
Archer Cunningham Gunderson
Armye Dannemeyer Hall (OH)
Aspin Darden Hall (TX)
Atkins Davis Hamilton
AuCoin DeFazio Hammerschmidt
Bacchus DeLauro Hancock
Baker DeLay Hansen
Ballenger Dellums Harris
Barrett Derrick Hastert
Bartlett Dickinson Hatcher
Barton Dicks Hayes (IL)
Baileman Dixon Hefley
Bellenson Donnelly Hefner
Bennett Dooley Henry
Bentley Doolittle Hergert
Bereuter Dorgan (ND) Hertel
Bevill Hoagland
Billbray Dorman (CA)
Billrakis Downey
Billie Dreier
Boehler Duncan
Boehner Durbin
Bonior Dwyer
Borski Early
Boucher Edwards (CA)
Boxer Edwards (OK)
Brewster Edwards (TX)
Brooks Emerson
Broomfield Engel
Browder English
Brown Erdreich
Bruce Espy
Bryant Evans
Bunning Fascell
Burton Fawell
Bustamante Fazio
Byron Feighan
Callahan Fields
Camp Fish
Campbell (CA) Flake
Cardin Foglietta
Carper Ford (MI)
Carr Frank (MA)
Chandler Franks (CT)
Chapman Frost
Clay Gallegly
Clement Gallo
Clinger Gaydos
Coble Gejdenson
Coleman (MO) Gekas
Coleman (TX) Gephardt
Collins (IL) Geren
Collins (MI) Gibbons
Combest Gilchrist
Gillmor Kostmayer

Kyl Oberstar Shays
LaFalce Obey Shuster
Lagomarsino Olin Sikorski
Lancaster Ortiz Slisky
Lantos Orton Skaggs
LaRocco Owens (NY) Skeen
Laughlin Owens (UT) Skelton
Leach Oxley Slattery
Lehman (CA) Packard Slaughter (NY)
Lehman (FL) Pallone Slaughter (VA)
Lent Panetta Smith (FL)
Levin (MI) Parker Smith (IA)
Lewis (CA) Patterson Smith (NJ)
Lewis (FL) Paxon Smith (OR)
Lewis (GA) Payne (NJ) Smith (TX)
Lightfoot Payne (VA) Solarz
Lipinski Pease Solomon
Livingston Pelosi Spence
Lloyd Penny Spratt
Long Perkins Staggers
Lowery (CA) Peterson (FL) Peterson (MN)
Lowey (NY) Luken Stark
Luken Machtley Petri Stearns
Machtley Madigan Pickle Stenholm
Madigan Porter Stokes
Markey Poshard Studts
Marlenee Price Stump
Martin Pursell Sundquist
Martinez Quillen Swett
Mavroules Rahall Swift
Mazzoli Ramstad Tallon
McCandless Rangel Tanner
McCloskey Ravenel Tauzin
McCollum Ray Taylor (MS)
McCrery Reed Taylor (NC)
McCurdy Regula Thomas (CA)
McDade Rhodes Thomas (GA)
McDermott Richardson Thomas (WY)
McGrath Ridge Thornton
McHugh Riggs Torricelli
McMillan (NC) Rinaldo Towns
McMillen (MD) Ritter Traficant
McNulty Roberts Traxler
Meyers Roe Unsoeld
Mfume Roemer Upton
Michel Rogers Valentine
Miller (CA) Rohrbacher Vander Jagt
Miller (OH) Ros-Lehtinen Vento
Miller (WA) Rose Visclosky
Mineta Rostenkowski Volkmer
Mink Roth Vucanovich
Moakley Roukema Walker
Mollinari Rowland Walsh
Mollohan Russo Washington
Montgomery Sabo Waters
Moody Sanders Waxman
Moorhead Sangmeister Weber
Moran Santorum Weldon
Morella Sarpalius Whelan
Morrison Sawyer Whitten
Mrzacek Saxton Williams
Murphy Schaefer Wilson
Murtha Schaefer Wise
Myers Schaefer Wolpe
Nagle Schiff Wyden
Natcher Schiff Wyden
Neal (MA) Schroeder Yates
Neal (NC) Schulze Yates
Nichols Schumer Yatron
Nowak Sensenbrenner Young (AK)
Nussle Serrano Young (FL)
Oakar Sharp Zelliff
Oberstar Shaw Zimmer

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—13

Campbell (CO) Levine (CA) Torres
de la Garza Matsui Udall
Dymally McEwen Weiss
Ford (TN) Roybal
Hayes (LA) Snowe

□ 1610

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—17

Berman Gordon Snowe
Campbell (CO) Hayes (LA) Synar
de la Garza Levine (CA) Torres
Dymally Matsui Udall
Eckart McEwen Weiss
Ford (TN) Roybal

□ 1616

So (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

certain terms that any further repression will be answered by swift American retaliation in terms of economic sanctions, termination of exchanges and loss of support for international economic integration. Because we must not doom the struggling efforts at perestroika, we have an obligation to speak out now and make clear what our reaction to any further violent repression will be. There can then be no doubt in the mind of the Soviet leader or any of the forces surrounding him about the consequences of a further military crackdown.

The long-suffering Soviet people are looking to the American people and to the United States Congress for support in this critical time. Particularly as we commit ourselves to war in the Persian Gulf to stop oppression, we must reiterate our opposition to repression of democratic movements in the Soviet Union. We must support Mr. Gorbachev's efforts at perestroika and glasnost, and must speak out clearly when things threaten to go terribly awry.

I strongly support this resolution and urge all my colleagues to do likewise.

CRISIS IN THE BALTIC STATES

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my strong support for Senate Concurrent Resolution 6. This resolution conveys the heartfelt belief of the Senate that recent events in the Baltic States require the United States to reevaluate its support of and aid to the Soviet Union.

Mr. President, our country has never recognized the forcible annexation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Thus, Soviet violence against the citizens of these states is particularly reprehensible. At the current time, at least 20 Lithuanian and Latvian citizens have lost their lives at the hands of Soviet troops.

I concur with the call for a review of all economic benefits provided by the United States to the Soviet Union. I particularly applaud the withdrawal of consideration for Soviet most-favored-nation status until negotiations on restoration of Baltic sovereignty have begun. I am also pleased the resolution encourages our allies to follow a similar policy in regard to the Baltic States.

I urge swift adoption of this important measure.

BALTIC REPRESSION

Mr. METZENBAUM. Mr. President, I am appalled by the continuing violent repression of the people of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union. During the past week, attacks on unarmed civilians in Lithuania and Latvia have resulted in 20 deaths and hundreds of injuries.

We cannot allow this repression to go on unchecked. While much of the world's attention is focused on events in the Middle East, President Gorbachev is attempting to stifle the legitimate democratic movements of the Baltic States. It is time that we show

President Gorbachev that we are deeply committed to the cause of freedom everywhere.

Today, the Senate overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling on President Bush to reexamine economic assistance to the Soviet Union, in light of the crisis in the Baltics. I believe that American aid policy toward the Soviet Union must change to reflect our condemnation for Soviet actions in the Baltics.

The Soviet Union must reject the use of force toward the democratically elected governments of the Baltic States. We must continue to stand behind the Baltic peoples in their struggle for independence.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I want to add my voice to those speaking in support of this resolution which strongly condemns the Soviet Government's violent crackdown in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

While our thoughts are necessarily focused on hostilities in the gulf and the threats to our forces on the front lines, we cannot forget the brave men and women in the Baltic States who are waging their own struggle for freedom and the principle of self-determination.

The violent reaction of the Soviet Government to events in the Baltics is troubling and disheartening. Just months ago, we rejoiced as the winds of democracy swept across Eastern Europe. We applauded the promise of domestic and international reform inherent in the policies of glasnost and perestroika. It is all the more abhorrent then to watch the Soviet Government revert in the last few weeks to a policy of force and terror against unarmed civilians waging a peaceful campaign for democracy and freedom.

Mr. President, we recognize that President Gorbachev faces a daunting array of economic, political, and social problems throughout the Soviet Union. There is much the United States and the West can do to help, but we cannot help if the forces of repression are again ascendant in the Soviet Union. Nor will we stand by silently if the response to democratic movements in the Baltics continues to be violence and intimidation.

President Bush put it exactly right when he said:

Legitimacy is not built by force; it's earned by the consensus of the people, and by the protection of human and political rights. It would be tragic if the difficult but very real progress toward democratization in the Soviet Union in the past few years were to be undone by an ill-considered return to the methods of the police state.

I urge President Bush to continue to impress upon Mr. Gorbachev our deep revulsion at events in the Baltic States. And if the situation continues to deteriorate in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, I hope the President will work with our allies and through the United Nations to devise an appropriately tough international response.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally to both sides.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AKAKA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of our time on the resolution.

Mr. SPECTER. On behalf of this side of the aisle, Mr. President, we yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

VETERANS COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now proceed to H.R. 3, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

A bill (H.R. 3) to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise, effective as of January 1, 1991, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of such veterans.

The Senate proceeded to consider bill.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, the Senate is now considering legislation to provide disabled veterans and the survivors of veterans who died as a result of their service-connected injuries a 1991 cost-of-living increase.

This legislation is necessary because in the closing days of the 101st Congress, legislation that would have provided cost-of-living increase in the veterans disability compensation and survivors benefits programs were derailed in both Houses over controversy with agent orange.

As a result of the dispute, disabled veterans and their survivors were the only recipients of Federal entitlement programs who did not receive a cost-of-living adjustment prior to the adjournment of the 101st Congress.

That situation requires immediate correction by this Congress through enactment of legislation to increase the monthly rates of disability compensation and of dependency and indemnity compensation [DIC] by 5.4 percent, effective retroactively to January 1, 1991.

Disabled veterans and their survivors should expect to see the cost-of-living adjustment and a lump sum retroactive payment reflected in their

April checks, according to sources in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. President, expedited consideration and passage of this COLA bill is one of my highest priorities. On January 14, I introduced legislation, S. 1, that would have provided the retroactive compensation and DIC COLA's and said it would be the first piece of legislation to be considered in the Senate. Designating the first bill is one of the prerogatives that I have as majority leader and I felt that this bill deserved that designation and the importance which goes with that designation.

S. 1, would have mandated an independent review of the health effects of veterans exposure to agent orange or other herbicides while serving in the Republic of Vietnam.

Today the Senate is going to consider a clean COLA bill. That does not mean that those who have consistently pushed for a resolution of the agent orange compensation and research issues have given up the fight. Indeed, just the opposite is the case.

As was discussed in introductory statements for S. 1, negotiations on the agent orange provisions have been taking place for the past several weeks.

I am pleased that those negotiations have proved fruitful, as evidenced by the companion agent orange compromise legislation introduced concurrently by Representative MONTGOMERY, the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Senator TOM DASCHLE, who has been among the most active Senators on this issue.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Senate next week will consider legislation to provide compensation for veterans suffering from three diseases associated with agent orange exposure and to help resolve the scientific questions about the health effects of veterans exposure to agent orange or other herbicides.

I am pleased that these issues, both important and deserving of immediate consideration, can be taken up so quickly by the Senate.

I believe the situation more than justifies my statement on January 14 that the provisions in S. 1 related to agent orange by themselves were not impediments to the timely passage of the retroactive cost-of-living adjustments, if interested Senators worked in good faith to reach agreement on the consideration of both issues, could be worked out.

I am pleased that Senator ALAN CRANSTON, the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, has been able to work with his counterparts in the House and other interested Senators on both sides of the aisle to reach such an agreement.

Mr. President, since S. 1 was introduced, thousands of American troops have been sent to duty stations in the Persian Gulf and are now engaged in combat there.

We have in the Middle East the best, most modern military hardware and technology. But more important, we have the morale, the spirit and the courage of the American men and women who serve us in the Armed Forces, for it is they who operate the hardware and understand the technology.

The fact is that every military organization, indeed every human society, rises or falls on human will, human resolve, human courage. If our Nation fails to meet its obligation to those who served in times of crisis in the past, it will be unable to summon those needed to serve in times of crisis in the future.

As my colleagues know, the U.S. Government provides compensation benefits to service-disabled veterans and to the survivors of veterans who die as a result of their service-connected injuries in order to compensate them for the loss of earning capacity due to those disabilities.

The monthly compensation paid to each veteran is based on the degree of disability and the number of dependents. In the case of a veteran's survivors, compensation benefits are based on the veteran's service rank.

The compensation and DIC programs are not indexed to any inflation factor as are most other Federal entitlement programs. The 2.1 million disabled veterans and the 323,000 survivors depend on Congress to enact annual cost-of-living adjustments or COLA's to prevent the erosion of their benefits.

So, in addition to providing a measure of economic relief and justice to those who have served before, enactment of this legislation should also serve as a signal to those who serve in today's Armed Forces today that this country recognizes and will meet its most fundamental and sacred obligation to them now and in years to come.

In closing, Mr. President, I am pleased that swift enactment of a veterans compensation and DIC COLA bill been accomplished by this Senate. I congratulate all of my colleagues who have worked together to that end, including the distinguished managers of the bill, Senator DeCONCINI and Senator SPECTER, and as I noted earlier, Senator DASCHLE, who has played a leading role in the enactment of this and the agent orange legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER: The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. DeCONCINI: Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for his swift action on H.R. 3, the Veterans Cost of Living Adjustment Act of 1991.

As the ranking Democratic member on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs I am very pleased and honored to respond to the request from the distinguished chairman, Senator CRANSTON, to serve as floor manager for this important legislation with my good friend and colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SPECTER.

As many of my colleagues know, Senator CRANSTON is unable to be here because of health. We wish him a speedy recovery and certainly wish him well. He certainly would have liked to have been here today for the final action on this bill to provide the fiscal year 1991 cost-of-living increase in compensation paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs to service-disabled veterans and to survivors of veterans who died from service-connected disabilities.

Senator CRANSTON has been a leader in this for the 14½ years that I have been in this body, and he has been a constant, persistent advocate of all veterans benefits, but he has worked so long and hard on this. In the waning days of the last Congress it was a big disappointment to him, that he shared with me before he went to California. So I know he will be especially pleased today, having recently undergone surgery, to see this pass.

As my colleagues will recall, we sought in vain last year to have the Senate consider a bill providing a veterans cost-of-living increase. Unfortunately there was objection to the agent orange and certain other provisions of the bill that also were included in the COLA bill, then S. 2100. In the waning days of the 101st Congress the Senate consideration of S. 2100 was blocked. I am sorry to say, as a result, veterans did not receive their annual COLA's. It is most regrettable that these deserving individuals, alone among all the Federal beneficiaries, have not yet received a fiscal year 1991 COLA.

I am advised today that once this bill is passed it will be several months before that COLA is retroactively delivered and provided to the veterans. So, quite frankly, I think we owe them an apology. Maybe it was justifiable under somebody's standards, understanding how this place operates, but I think it indeed was very unfortunate.

Since our last attempt in October to pass S. 2100, America has once again called upon our men and women in uniform to answer the call to arms. At great risk to themselves and great hardship to their families, they have once again selflessly answered the call.

Given their dedication to duty, we in Congress must do ours. We must lay aside the differences between individual Members and between the respective Houses of Congress in order to meet the urgent needs of our veterans who served in prior conflicts and to restore the confidence of those veterans of tomorrow who are serving right now, today.

I trust we are about to cure the last Congress' omission by passing and sending to the President immediately H.R. 3, which the House passed earlier, yesterday, by a unanimous rollcall vote. This measure will provide a cost-of-living increase retroactive to January 1, 1991. The increase, 5.4 percent,

is the same as the Social Security COLA for fiscal year 1991.

H.R. 3 is identical to title I of Senate bill 1, the proposed Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Increase and Agent Orange Act of 1991. Senate bill 1 was introduced by the distinguished majority leader who is a member of the Veterans' Committee.

As the majority leader made clear in introducing S. 1 in his statement today which contained the COLA and Agent Orange provisions from last session's omnibus veterans legislation, S. 2100, the swift enactment of both the fiscal year 1991 veterans COLA and the agent orange legislation are among the Senate's highest priorities.

I think it is very rewarding that the Democrats and Republicans have no dispute in this body about enacting both of these pieces of legislation at this time.

While there was little question that a COLA increase would have been passed early this Congress, the battle in the Persian Gulf certainly has caused each of us to reflect upon the importance of this legislation to those who have served and are serving in combat today.

The dispute between the House and the Senate on the agent orange legislation was quickly resolved and 2 days after the commencement of hostilities an historic agreement was reached on this important legislation dealing with agent orange.

Substantially identical bills containing the provisions of the proposed Agent Orange Act of 1991 were introduced in both Houses of Congress. S. 238 was introduced in the Senate by the distinguished Senator from South Dakota [Mr. DASCHLE], who has worked tirelessly on this issue even before he came to the Senate 4 years ago with the dedication that I have not seen too many times around here. I am sure he is pleased that finally he has been able to put this together, both in the House and the Senate.

On the House side, H.R. 556 was introduced by the chairman of the Veterans' Committee, SONNY MONTGOMERY.

Both bills enjoy strong bipartisan support, including support from those who opposed the agent orange legislation that we sought to enact last year.

Senator DASCHLE and the committee members and the staff members have worked hard to build a coalition here that 3 months ago, quite frankly, I did not think was possible. Thanks to the leadership of Senator MITCHELL, Senator CRANSTON, and many others, disabled veterans and their survivors finally will receive the COLA they so greatly deserve. And Vietnam-era veterans and their families can now be confident Congress will soon act favorably on the agent orange measure as well.

On behalf of this Senator and Chairman CRANSTON, I know, I would like to congratulate and thank the chairman of the House committee, SONNY MONT-

GOMERY, the ranking minority member of the Senate and House committee, Senator SPECTER now—it was Senator MURKOWSKI—and Representative BOB STUMP, the ranking minority Member in the House, who played critical roles in obtaining enactment of this legislation.

I also want to pay special tribute to the majority and minority staff of both the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs, especially Ed Scott who is here, the majority staff director, and Bill Brew, general counsel from the Senate, and also Tim Gearan of my staff who has done a great deal of work on veterans' legislation over the years. I, frankly, do not think we would be here if these staff people were not able to but together the necessary compromise agreement and bring the parties together, because there were some very, very strong feelings in the waning days of the last Congress.

Mr. President, as I mentioned, Senator CRANSTON deserves a great deal of credit for this legislation as he does any veterans legislation that goes through this body. I only wish he was here.

I ask in his absence that a statement by him be printed in the RECORD at this point.

The statement of Mr. CRANSTON follows:

H.R. 3—THE VETERANS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS OF 1991

© Mr. CRANSTON. Mr. President, as the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am very pleased that the Senate finally is about to take final action on a bill to provide a fiscal year 1991 cost-of-living increase in compensation paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs to service-disabled veterans and to survivors of veterans who died from a service-connected disability.

Mr. President, prior to the end of the last Congress, I took every step I could to have the Senate consider a bill, S. 2100, providing the fiscal year 1991 compensation COLA. Unfortunately, as my colleagues will recall, objection was raised on the other side of the aisle because of opposition to the agent orange and certain other provisions of that bill. Because of those objections, Senate consideration of S. 2100 was precluded. As a consequence, veterans and survivors of veterans did not receive their COLA for fiscal year 1991. I was profoundly disappointed that these deserving individuals did not receive a fiscal year 1991 COLA, unlike all other Federal beneficiaries.

Mr. President, I am genuinely pleased that today we will remedy the situation with passage of H.R. 3, which I expect the President to sign immediately. The House passed this bill yesterday by a unanimous vote and the Senate, I am sure, will do the same today. This measure will provide a 5.4-percent COLA effective retroactively to January 1, 1991, thereby ensuring that veterans and survivors will

get the full increase they would have received if we had enacted S. 2100 last year. The percentage increase is the same as the Social Security COLA for fiscal year 1991, consistent with our prior practice.

Mr. President, H.R. 3 is identical to title I of S. 1, the proposed Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Increase and Agent Orange Act of 1991. I was an original cosponsor of S. 1, which was introduced by the distinguished majority leader, Mr. MITCHELL, who is a member of our committee. Using S. 1 for this veterans legislation represented recognition of the extremely high priority Senator MITCHELL and I and others attached to quick enactment of both the fiscal year 1991 COLA and agent orange legislation at the outset of this Congress.

As I indicated in my January 17 statement on the introduction of S. 238, the proposed Agent Orange Act of 1991, I am very pleased that we finally have reached an historic agreement on agent orange legislation. At the same time that Senator DASCHLE introduced S. 238 in the Senate, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman MONTGOMERY introduced a substantively identical bill, H.R. 556, in the House. Both bills have the support of those who opposed the agent orange legislation that we sought to enact last year. Thus, I am certain this measure will be enacted very soon. In fact, yesterday the majority leader received unanimous consent to take up S. 238 at any time following consultation with the minority leader and announced his intention to bring that bill up next week. I understand that House action on the counterpart measure, H.R. 556, also is being planned for early next week.

I congratulate and thank House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman SONNY MONTGOMERY, and the ranking minority members of the Senate and House committees, Senator MURKOWSKI and Representative BOB STUMP, as well as the chairman, Mr. APPEGATE, and the outgoing ranking minority member, Mr. McEWEN, of the House Committee's Subcommittee on Compensation, Pension, and Insurance, who all have played critical roles in obtaining enactment of this extremely important measure.

I also thank our committee's ranking Democratic member, Senator DECONCINI, for managing this bill in my absence. With the excellent help of his staff members who assist on veterans' issues, especially Mary Hawkins and Tim Gearan, Senator DECONCINI consistently has been a very strong and effective advocate for our Nation's veterans over the years.

I also would like to express my gratitude for their fine work on this legislation to the House committee's majority staff members, John Brizzi, Pat Ryan, and Mack Fleming, and minority staff members, Kingston Smith and Carl Commenator, and to the Senate

committee's minority staff, Todd Mullins and Alan Ptak, and, for all their help to me on this measure, majority staff members Kim Morin, Michael Cogan, Bill Brew, and Ed Scott.

Mr. President, I want to take special note of the efforts of Chris Yoder, who left our committee's minority staff earlier this month. Chris served as a professional staff member on the Republican side, responsible for benefits legislation and oversight, for 6 years. He was a very talented, dedicated worker here, and I know I speak for all committee members and staff in wishing him well in his new position at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. President, I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I am pleased to participate in the consideration of this important legislation as the first of my duties as ranking Republican on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. I extend my congratulations to my colleague, Senator MURKOWSKI, who has assumed the vice chairmanship of the Intelligence Committee. It is a pleasure to be working with the distinguished Senator from Arizona, Senator DECONCINI. I associate myself with his remarks in support and praise for the staff and others who have worked on this important legislation.

The reasons it is especially pleasing to me to have this as the first matter on which I am working as ranking Republican is the first veteran whom I ever knew was a disabled war veteran from World War I, my father, Harry Specter. As a disabled veteran, he was the recipient of disability payments which, as I recall as a young child, was all that kept the wolf from the door when I was growing up in Wichita, KS.

My father was a man who came to the United States at the age of 18 from the Ukraine in Russia before there was a Soviet Union. He was honored to serve his country in World War I. He served with the lofty rank of buck private. He fought in the Argonne Forest. He was severely wounded and carried shrapnel in his legs until his dying day. In that capacity, as a disabled war veteran, he did receive a check.

I remember as a youngster the trauma which gripped the country and this city on the veterans bonus march. I know how important it is for disabled veterans to be able to receive the compensation which is due to them.

It certainly is an anomaly and a very regrettable fact that of all those Federal beneficiaries who received cost-of-living adjustments in 1991, the one group omitted were the disabled veterans. If you could have picked any group less deserving to be omitted, it would have been the disabled veterans. Because of the way that the Congress

of the United States works when there is a controversy on a piece of legislation, and an included item was benefits to the disabled veterans, they have been severely disadvantaged. So I think it is entirely fitting and proper that an early order of business is to correct this item.

Considering my position as ranking Republican, I have prepared legislation myself which was introduced on the first day that legislation could be introduced, January 14. My bill number was S. 41. I did not receive as low a bill number as the distinguished majority leader, who had it marked as S. 1.

On preliminary calls, there were some 38 cosponsors who immediately signed on to S. 41. I am reasonably confident that this will be a unanimous vote.

I ask unanimous consent at the conclusion of my remarks that a list of the original cosponsors of S. 41, my legislation, identical to S. 1, also identical to H.R. 3, be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have a few more words on the subject, because a good bit of what I planned to say has already been covered by the distinguished majority leader and the distinguished Senator from Arizona [Mr. DECONCINI].

But I think it is important to focus on our duties in the Congress, in a representative democracy, our duties for American people to treat veterans appropriately. We owe a great deal to the veterans of America.

As I say, that is a very personal thing to me, because of my father's service in World War I. But we still have veterans from World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and veterans who have served and are entitled to these payments aside from the period of wartime service.

Now we have Desert Storm. As we speak, young Americans, fighting men and women, are risking their lives. It is very important that the U.S. Government treat veterans fairly, both as to those who have served and to those who are serving at the present time.

While the disability payments and the disability COLA may be far from the minds of those who are subjecting themselves to that kind of disability in the Persian Gulf today, this is a factor that ought to be taken into account. I am delighted to see this bill receive early attention.

We have a very tight time limit. There are other Senators on the floor who wish to speak. I yield the floor at this point.

EXHIBIT 1

VETERANS COMPENSATION RATES COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 1991—38 COSPONSORS TO S. 41

Senators: Murkowski, Simpson, Thurmond, Jeffords, D'Amato, Warner, McCain, Packwood, Shelby, Kassebaum, Craig, Phil

Gramm, Dole, Pressler, Symms, Cohen, Mack, Hollings, Lugar, Cochran, Kasten, Coats, Heinz, Bond, Smith, Durenberger, Hatfield, Nickles, Chafee, Ford, Danforth, Wallop, McConnell, Biden, Roth, Gorton, Grassley, and Lott.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania yields the floor. Who yields time?

Mr. DECONCINI. Mr. President, I yield whatever time the Senator from Nevada wishes.

Mr. BRYAN. Two minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. BRYAN. I thank the Chair, and I thank my distinguished friend and colleague, the Senator from Arizona.

Mr. President, I strongly support veterans' cost-of-living allowances. I am pleased to rise today to support the immediate passage of H.R. 3 to retroactively provide the 1991 cost-of-living allowance for disabled veterans and their survivors.

It was most unfortunate that during the waning days of the 101st Congress actions were not taken to provide these cost-of-living adjustments. Disabled veterans and their families were the only Federal entitlement beneficiaries who did not receive a 1991 cost-of-living adjustment. This marked the first time that Congress failed to approve cost-of-living adjustments for disabled veterans while providing cost-of-living adjustments for other Federal beneficiaries. This was grossly inequitable.

Over 2 million disabled veterans, their surviving spouses and children depend on their disability compensation to live. Delaying their cost-of-living adjustments has caused them unnecessary worry and concern. We need to allay those fears immediately. The immediate passage of H.R. 3 will do just that.

The cost-of-living adjustment delay did force the reaching of an acceptable compromise on the agent orange issue, on which the majority leader and other of my colleagues have commented this morning. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of S. 238, the Agent Orange Act of 1991. The act is a big leap forward to resolving the long-standing issue of agent orange exposure and the compensation issues attendant to it. I am hopeful that my colleagues will also join me in the quick passage of this important act.

The Persian Gulf war amplifies the necessity of our immediate passage of the 1991 disability cost-of-living adjustment. When our military service personnel are asked to serve, they answer the call willingly and with distinction. When our veterans need assistance, Congress likewise must answer their call. Immediate passage of H.R. 3 will assure disabled veterans that Congress can indeed respond and answer.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. DeCONCINI: I yield the floor to the Senator from South Dakota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me commend the distinguished Senator from Arizona for his excellent statement.

Without reiterating all of those to whom we owe thanks this morning for the fact that we are here, let me endorse the distinguished Senator's list of those who deserve commendation for their efforts to pass this COLA legislation. Certainly without their support, especially that of the majority leader and the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we could not be here this morning.

Another group that ought to be mentioned is certainly the staff for their incredible effort the last couple of months in resolving our differences and bringing us to this point. I share the sentiment expressed so well by the distinguished Senator from Arizona.

I will have much more to say about S. 238, my agent orange legislation, next week. In the limited time that I have today, I would prefer to limit my remarks to H.R. 3.

Mr. President, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, a bill to provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment, retroactive to January 1, 1990, to both disabled veterans and dependents of veterans who die of service-connected disabilities. It is only appropriate that this bill be the first bill sent to the President in the 102d Congress.

Today we are rectifying, at least in part, an unfortunate situation that was created last October when the Senate was prevented from considering S. 2100, the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Amendments of 1990. S. 2100 contained this 5.4-percent COLA—the same COLA that Social Security recipients, military retirees, and all other Federal beneficiaries received.

But that is behind us. The fact is, we are considering a new cost-of-living adjustment bill today.

I have said on this floor time and again that we owe those veterans and those who are currently serving—our soldiers, the men and women serving in the Persian Gulf, as others have served in past efforts—we owe them, every bit of support that we as a Congress can provide. And that support must come both during and after their service.

Last Monday, I was pleased to join Senator MITCHELL, the majority leader; Senator CRANSTON, chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee; Senator KERRY, and several other Senators in introducing legislation that would also provide a 5.4-percent COLA for service-disabled veterans and their survivors.

The fact that we are considering the COLA bill today, during the first week of regular legislative business, reflects the importance all of us place on the

commitment the United States owes the men and women who serve this country in the Armed Forces. The fact that the majority leader's first bill in the 102d Congress, S. 1, is the COLA bill reflects the strength of that commitment.

While I am pleased that we are considering this bill today, I am also saddened by the realization that our failure last year to act on S. 2100, which included this 5.4-percent COLA, caused undue pain and worry to many veterans and their families who depend on their disability checks to meet their basic needs. For many elderly, service-connected veterans in my State, their monthly VA disability check is the only way they can make ends meet.

The COLA is important to many service-connected veterans and their families—not only financially, but because to many veterans it symbolizes our Government's recognition of their service to our Nation.

Over the course of the past few years, veterans have witnessed a slow deterioration of VA services. They have witnessed countless veterans seeking VA health care only to be told that they no longer qualify for VA health care services. They have watched as entire wings of VA hospitals closed simply because the VA did not have enough doctors or nurses to staff additional beds. During the recent budget battle, veterans saw VA programs take more than their fair share of cuts in the deficit reduction measure approved by Congress. For many veterans, congressional failure to enact the COLA in October represented yet another failure of the system to meet veterans' legitimate needs.

Some veterans are even beginning to question our national commitment to the men and women who serve us so courageously in both war and peace. This is a tragic development, especially in light of the national challenge we currently face in the Persian Gulf.

As one veteran told me, "As a disabled Vietnam veteran who saw heavy combat while serving in the Riverine forces in Vietnam, this COLA is very little pay-back for the pain and suffering I have been through as have many other comrades in our ranks. I feel the passage of this most important bill would benefit the disabled veterans not only in a monetary amount, but will reflect that the American people have not forgotten about the service and sacrifices given by the disabled veteran."

I do not believe that our national commitment has waned. The American people and the vast majority in Congress are deeply committed to America's veterans. It is time for us to demonstrate that commitment in a meaningful way.

The first step in that process is to deliver veterans the COLA they deserve as expeditiously as possible. That is why we are here today, and I

am pleased that we have finally overcome the obstacles to consideration of this bill.

The second step is to deal honestly and fully with the outstanding issues related to past wars. That entails a willingness to resolve the issues of agent orange and posttraumatic stress disorder. That entails a willingness to provide health care to every veteran who was promised that care. That entails a willingness to respond, in a timely way, to all veterans' legitimate needs.

I am pleased to report that an agreement has been reached on agent orange, and that legislation will be considered within the next few days in both the House and the Senate. I am hopeful that we will also be able to move to the other important provisions in S. 2100 in the very near future. But I hope everyone here today realizes that there is still much work to be done to address the real, legitimate, and sometimes immediate needs of our nation's veterans. We cannot become complacent in that regard.

The third step we must make to fulfill our obligations to veterans is to ensure that we provide for our future veterans. Nothing could drive that message home more clearly than the images of the men and women serving us right now in the Middle East. We must be prepared to meet their needs in education and employment. We must be prepared to treat and compensate them for their wounds, whether those wounds are apparent or hidden, physical or psychological. And, although the costs are sometimes high, we must be prepared to pay them, for it is what our veterans have earned.

In addressing veterans' needs, we are now at step one. I ask my colleagues to join me in reaffirming our commitment to our nation's veterans by giving our unanimous approval to this 5.4-percent COLA.

It is equally imperative that we work hard to see that veterans are not denied the other important health care and compensation benefits that were originally included in S. 2100. Passage of this COLA should not be seen as an end, but, rather, a beginning toward rectifying the injustices that have been dealt to our Nation's veterans.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. DeCONCINI. Mr. President, I understand the time on this side has almost lapsed. The Senator from Florida has asked for additional time. I ask unanimous consent that 5 additional minutes be granted to this side of the aisle for Senator GRAHAM of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Chair. I thank the Senator from Arizona [Mr. DECONCINI]. I appreciate his courtesy.

Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3, legislation which will authorize a cost-of-living increase and benefits for service-connected disabled veterans and certain survivors for the 1991 fiscal year.

This bill is identical to legislation which I introduced on January 14, S. 107, which was cosponsored by Senators MIKULSKI, AKAKA, SHELBY, MACK, LAUFENBERG, and BENTSEN.

Mr. President, I think we all agree that Congress made a serious mistake last year in allowing a deadlock over other issues to stand in the way of authorizing a cost-of-living increase for disabled veterans. We provided a cost-of-living increase for Social Security recipients, for military retirees, for Federal retirees, and for civil servants. All of those were afforded a 5.4-percent increase in benefits. But the 2.2 million service-connected disabled veterans and the over 300,000 families of those service men and women who died in combat were not. This bill will correct that. At a time when we have asked for over 400,000 American men and women to put themselves at risk in the Middle East, we should not forget those who have gone before them in defense of our freedom and our liberty. When the United States does not provide proper compensation for their service, we send the wrong message to today's troops and to those who may be considering careers and the armed services.

Mr. President, this bill is a simple issue of fairness. It is a matter of providing to veterans what they deserve.

Mr. President, over the recess period, in November and December, I met with groups of veterans in two communities in my State, in the Tampa Bay area and later in Pensacola. In those meetings I was struck by the extreme level of patriotism of those men and women who had already served and served at great personal sacrifice.

I was also struck, at the meetings in Tampa and in Pensacola, with the real need for this cost-of-living adjustment. Many of the men and women with whom I met were severely disabled, several in wheelchairs. Still others had lost a limb, had lost all or partial vision. They depend upon this veterans' disability payment to meet their basic needs. Like all other Americans, they have been facing a gradual increase in the cost of living. So denying this cost-of-living increase had real human consequences.

Mr. President, I am pleased today that we are recognizing those human consequences and are rectifying our failure to act last year.

Some have asked, including during the course of the meetings in Tampa and Pensacola, would this increase the Federal deficit. The answer to that question is "no." The issue in this particular debate is one of fulfilling the

Nation's moral obligation. We have already dealt with the financial obligation because Congress provided for a cost-of-living increase in the reconciliation bill which we passed last October. Therefore, passage of this legislation will not count as new spending. We have already provided in our Nation's budget for our disabled veterans. We are now completing payment on that obligation.

Mr. President, I have joined the distinguished chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and others in cosponsoring a revised version of the omnibus veterans' benefit bill which this Senate passed last year. I am pleased that agreements have been reached on the agent orange legislation and trust that in the next few days we will enact that important legislation.

Disabled veterans should not pay the price for our inability to reach agreement on other veterans' services. Veterans are not political pawns. They are people. They are real men and women, men and women who have made a contract with their Government to support and defend the United States at great risk. This legislation is necessary for us to live up to our part of that contract.

I commend the majority leader and the chairman of the committee for ensuring early action on this bill and urge my colleagues to join in the passage of H.R. 3.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SPECTER addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. I ask unanimous consent that Senator RUDMAN be added as an additional cosponsor to the pending legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. Who yields time?

Mr. DECONCINI. How much time does the Senator from Pennsylvania still have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority has 17 minutes.

Mr. DECONCINI. And is 10 minutes of that included for Senator SIMPSON?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

Mr. DECONCINI. Ten minutes. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time to the Senator?

Mr. SPECTER. I yield to the distinguished Senator from Alaska, former ranking Republican on the committee, as much time as he requires within the time available.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and I thank my colleague, the junior Senator from Pennsylvania. Let me take this opportunity to extend to him a welcome as the ranking minority member of the Vet-

erans' Committee in the Senate. As ranking member on that committee for the last 4 years; I look forward to working with the Senator from Pennsylvania as he assumes that position. The Senator from Alaska has taken the vice chairmanship of the Intelligence Committee, but I still look forward to working on the important needs of our veterans.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3, legislation which would provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment for the 2.2 million veterans who receive disability compensation for service-connected disabilities and to the 340,000 survivors who receive dependency and indemnity compensation.

Mr. President, this bill provides a 5.4-percent COLA for our veterans and would be retroactive to January of 1991.

Further, Mr. President, this legislation represents unfinished business for this body. Last year, Congress did not pass a veterans' COLA bill. I believe this was extremely unfortunate since America's service-connected disabled veterans have as high a priority on the Nation's resources as any group or any cause.

Last year the COLA bill ran aground as a consequence of attempts to take advantage, in the opinion of the Senator from Alaska, of its priority by using it as a vehicle to carry controversial and unrelated measures. America's disabled veterans were the victims unfortunately of this effort.

I ask that we delay no longer providing service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents the cost-of-living adjustment. We now have a chance to undo last year's confusion and political posturing that confounded well-intentioned efforts to pass a COLA for disabled veterans and their dependents.

My colleagues may be interested to know that last night I received a statement from the Office of Management and Budget which stated the administration's strong support for this legislation. The administration further noted that the cost of the COLA—which is estimated to be \$412 million—is included in the budget baseline and is, therefore, not subject to the pay-as-you-go provision in the Budget Reconciliation Act.

Once again, I would like to commend my colleagues in the House for approving H.R. 3 yesterday. Specifically, I wish to applaud the fine efforts of Mr. MONTGOMERY and Mr. STUMP.

I urge prompt Senate approval of H.R. 3, a COLA bill with no extraneous provisions attached. I thank my colleagues who are working toward that end.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge the outstanding work of Chris Yoder who recently left the staff of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Chris served as a professional staff member for the Republican staff for over 5 years. His knowledge of vet-

erans' benefits is extraordinary. He was a valued member of my staff.

Chris is now working in the Office of Congressional Affairs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I thank Chris for his loyalty, professionalism, and honesty. I wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DECONCINI. Mr. President, I wonder if the Senator from Pennsylvania would yield me the time that they are not going to use on their side.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I would be glad to do that.

Mr. DECONCINI. On behalf of Chairman CRANSTON, myself, and others on this side of the aisle, I want to join with Senator MURKOWSKI in taking special notice of the efforts of Chris Yoder, who left our committee's minority staff earlier this month.

Chris served as a professional staff member on the Republican side with responsibilities for benefits legislation and oversight for 6 years.

He served our country with distinction in Vietnam, and has been a very talented and dedicated worker here in the Senate Veterans' Committee.

I know I speak for all committee members and staffers in wishing him well in his new position at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate has made its first item of regular legislative business the consideration of a 5.4-percent cost-of-living increase, retroactive to January 1, 1991, for disabled veterans. As an indication of my support for providing this COLA, I have cosponsored COLA bills introduced by Senators SPECTER, DOMENICI, and McCAIN.

This action is long overdue. The delay in its provision has been a hardship for many of the approximately 2.5 million disabled veterans and their survivors nationally who will receive this COLA. Many Iowa veterans have written to me to tell me that the COLA will be of great help in their individual circumstances.

It is also the case that COLA's were provided for Federal pension programs—Social Security and Federal retirement, for example—and the veterans' COLA's should have been provided on schedule.

It is very difficult to explain to deserving Iowa veterans why the Congress failed to provide this COLA on schedule. They were rightfully distressed that we failed to untangle the legislative snarl which arose last year when we tried to move this legislation.

I am thankful that this year, the parties to the dispute which held up this legislation last year were able to agree on the issues on which they disagreed so that we could move forward on both the COLA and on the agent orange legislation which was involved in last year's dispute.

I know that Iowa disabled veterans will be thankful that we have finally moved on this COLA adjustment.

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I urge the passage of H.R. 3, which will provide a retroactive 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment for disabled American veterans and spouses and children of veterans who died of service-related injuries. This legislation will have the same effect as S. 41, of which I am an original cosponsor.

The 101st Congress adjourned last October without approving a COLA for disabled veterans and their survivors. This modest benefit was denied to over 2.5 million Americans because of congressional inaction. This was the first time Congress has failed to grant a COLA increase for disabled American veterans while providing COLA adjustments for other Federal beneficiaries. We need to ensure that this will be the last time that happens.

Our veterans and their survivors should expect Congress to provide the benefits they justly deserve. Under H.R. 3, the 5.4-percent COLA disabled veterans will receive is the same percentage increase as Federal and military and Social Security recipients received on January 1, 1991. The increase for veterans will be retroactive to January 1, 1991. I urge my colleagues to restore this benefit through quick passage of this vital legislation.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today in support of H.R. 3, the disabled veterans cost-of-living adjustment for 1991. This measure provides for a 5.4-percent increase in benefits to veterans with service-connected disabilities and their survivors which is retroactive to January 1, 1991. Of all the people in this great Nation, I cannot imagine any group more deserving of our support than our disabled veterans.

I have stated many times that the highest obligation of American citizenship is to defend this country in its time of need, and that this grateful Nation should provide for those who are disabled as a result of service to their country. We must never forget this obligation.

Accordingly, the House of Representatives has acted on this matter and the Senate must act promptly to ensure that our disabled veterans are provided with the benefits they so justly deserve. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

Mr. DURENBERGER. Mr. President, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this extremely important piece of legislation. This bill will raise the Government assistance to disabled veterans and the survivors of veterans who have died from service-related disabilities.

The bill provides full compensation on cost-of-living adjustments for qualifying veterans and survivors. This COLA is necessary and well-deserved.

Mr. President, it is important for us to note that disabled veterans and their survivors were the only recipients of Federal entitlement programs who did not receive a COLA increase last year. I support Congress' prompt

action here today to correct this inequity.

Mr. President, veterans and their families have earned our appreciation, our thanks, and our enduring gratitude for their service to this country. They have all made sacrifices on our behalf, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

The people of the United States have a responsibility to live up to our end of the bargain. The brave men and women who have served in our Armed Forces and suffered disabling injuries or wounds have earned the support that this bill provides.

And we must also look to our men and women currently serving in Desert Storm. This bill not only responds to those who have previously served, but also looks forward to those who are now serving the United States. We are very proud of them, and deeply thankful for their commitment and service to this country.

When we pass this legislation, we not only fulfill our end of the deal with current veterans, but we send a clear and unmistakable message of support to the men and women now in Desert Storm: You are appreciated; you are loved; you have earned our gratitude; and we will take care of you when you return.

This is a great country Mr. President. And we owe much of that greatness to the veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who have put themselves unselfishly in harm's way, and often paid a high price for doing so.

I am proud to have had a part in this legislation. Our veterans have earned it.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the Veterans Compensation Amendments Act of 1991, passed unanimously by the House yesterday. The measure will provide service-connected disabled veterans and their survivors with a 5.4-percent cost-of-living increase in their rates of compensation for this year. H.R. 3 makes payment of COLA's retroactive to January 1, thus ensuring that no disabled veteran will bear the cost in inflation.

Mr. President, veterans in my State—and throughout the Nation—are well aware that Congress failed to pass a disability compensation COLA bill prior to adjournment last year. This created an anomalous situation in which every other class of Federal annuitant—including Social Security and VA pension recipients—now receive 1991 COLA's with the exception of disabled veterans. This lamentable state of affairs exists as a result of last year's legislative impasse in which the compensation COLA was effectively held hostage by those who objected to legislation that would have codified and extended agent orange-related benefits.

I am glad to inform Hawaii veterans that both the disability COLA and an agent orange bill should be enacted this session. As I understand the legislative situation, the Senate will adopt the pending, clean COLA bill today, and, at a later date, perhaps a early as next week, debate and adopt compromise legislation on agent orange recently introduced in both Houses by Senator TOM DASCHLE and Representative SONNY MONTGOMERY.

Mr. President, the gulf conflict reminds us once again of our duty to care for our Nation's veterans. Therefore, adoption of this COLA measure could not have come at a more appropriate moment. For, unless we are very, very fortunate, many American soldiers are certain to be disabled in the war against Iraq. Passage of this bill will send a strong message to our men and women in the field that their Government supports their efforts and will continue to care for "he who has borne the battle."

In closing, I wish to commend all involved in working out this grand compromise, including the chairmen and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee as well as Representative LANE EVANS, Senator DASCHLE, and Senator JOHN KERRY, who have carried the ball on agent orange for so many years. That agreement could be reached on such a controversial matter is a tribute to their leadership on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise as a cosponsor of the veterans disability COLA bill. Since August the drums of war have beat with rising clamor, reminding the Congress and all Americans that our daily freedoms and the lifelong rights with which we are blessed in this country exist not only because of great leaders, great political thinkers, and a freedom-loving people at home, but also because great sacrifices have been made by soldiers at our most perilous moments. Unfortunately, this insistent clamor, rising like the ghost of Hamlet's father to remind him of his debts to the past, was seemingly drowned out by the din of political debate at the closing of the last Congress. Veterans did not deserve this cold shoulder, and today's troops must be assured that Congress will be more attentive when they return home. Thus, while I regret congressional inaction last October, I applaud the speed with which the Veterans' Committee and the leadership have brought this measure before us in this Congress. I have always supported COLA's for disabled veterans, and am pleased to vote to sustain our present veterans and to reassure those of the future.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I rise to voice my support for two measures before the Senate regarding disabled veterans, namely the Disabled Veterans Cost-of-Living Adjustment

[COLA] Act and the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

The COLA bill addresses a critical piece of unfinished business from the last session of Congress, the matter of a COLA for veterans and their dependents or survivors receiving disability compensation. Disabled veterans were the only individuals traditionally assured of a COLA for whom none was appropriated for this year. Adoption of this legislation will provide those eligible with a 5.4-percent COLA, an amount equal to that received in 1991 by Federal and military retirees and Social Security beneficiaries, retroactive to January 1, 1991:

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of the Senate version of H.R. 3, authored by the Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. SPECTER]. Thanks in part to Senator SPECTER's work, the COLA issue has been disentangled from more contentious matters facing the Department of Veterans Affairs and made a priority item in the Congress. With the adoption of COLA legislation, we can lay to rest the unfairness imposed upon our disabled veterans and their families, whose service to this country has not been nor will ever be forgotten.

Disabled veterans have paid a dear price in their service to our country. We owe it to those who live with the cost of freedom every day to approve this COLA in a timely way. We must also assure those who are being asked to face hostile fire today that, if they are disabled, their needs will not be neglected.

The same principle holds true for those Vietnam veterans disabled as a result of their exposure to agent orange. Agent orange, a herbicide used during the Vietnam conflict to defoliate large stretches of forest, is already recognized as a cause of soft-tissue sarcoma, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, and chlorance, and is suspected to be the source of several other diseases suffered by veterans exposed to it. Except for those veterans diagnosed with those first three conditions, troops exposed to agent orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam are not eligible for disability compensation, because the connection between exposure and afflictions has not been established.

For several years, I have worked to address this problem, and this year I have once again cosponsored legislation, S. 238, the Agent Orange Act of 1991, is, I believe, the long-sought-for compromise putting in place a procedure for establishing service connection for various diseases presumed to be linked to agent orange.

This bill has a number of strengths, a couple of which deserve special mention. The first is that the studies establishing links between agent orange and diseases suffered by veterans exposed to agent orange and other herbicides will be conducted by an objective group, the National Academy of Sciences. This independent research will then be placed in the hands of the

Secretary for Veterans Affairs, who will be in position to evaluate the level of compensation that is appropriate. This formula—reliable information in the hands of a decisionmaker whose concern for those affected has been demonstrated in the past—is in my opinion the best means to tackle the agent orange issue.

I urge my colleagues to join in support of these measures, both appropriate and long overdue.

Mr. PACKWOOD. Mr. President, I am delighted we are proceeding expeditiously to the veterans' COLA bill that will provide a 5.4-percent cost-of-living increase to our disabled veterans, retroactive to January 1, 1991. As an original cosponsor of the Senate bill, I am particularly pleased that the House yesterday quickly passed the identical companion measure, H.R. 3, and that the Senate will follow suit today.

It was grossly unfair to our disabled veterans that their COLA got derailed in the closing days of the 101st Congress. And it is only fitting that this be the first bill signed into law in this 102d Congress. Many of the 2.5 million disabled veterans and their survivors call Oregon their home. Throughout Oregon, there are thousands of deserving veterans who would be short-changed were Congress not to pass this legislation. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this fiscally responsible measure. It provides for a routine cost-of-living adjustment, an adjustment which is automatic for other entitlement programs.

There are many issues confronting American veterans that the Congress must address. However, none warrants such immediate attention as the COLA issue, particularly in light of the economic difficulties facing so many Americans during this period. For those who have risked life and limb to defend our country and its ideals, we must have compassion and understanding. Our American veterans deserve no less.

Mr. President, I am confident that this measure will pass and the President will sign it quickly. To the 2.5 million disabled veterans, rest assured that your concerns have been heard and will be addressed without further delay. I hope we will not again be witness to such inequity. The inability of the 101st Congress to pass this legislation created substantial hardship for these veterans and their dependents. These men and women should not have to wait any longer for the compensation they have earned.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise in support of H.R. 3, the so-called clean COLA bill. It will provide a retroactive cost-of-living adjustment of 5.4 percent in rates of service-connected disability compensation and in dependency and indemnity compensation for disabled veterans and their survivors. The House has already approved this measure, and with quick action by the

Senate and the President, the March check veterans receive should contain the increases for January and February as well.

This is good news for veterans, although it would have been preferable to have passed this COLA last year. As is well known by now, a dispute regarding agent orange prevented consideration of a comprehensive veterans benefits package in the closing days of the last session. I am pleased that we now have an agreement to consider agent orange legislation. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of that compromise, S. 238, as well as a sponsor of S. 1, a Senate bill which would provide the COLA. By reaching an agreement on these two issues, we have found a proper way to continue to support the needs of veterans from all eras.

Mr. President, in light of the war we currently find ourselves in, I think it is very beneficial for this Congress and this country to be considering veterans legislation. It is at times like this, when we are asking young men and women to put their lives and bodies on the line for their country, that the need for topnotch medical care in DVA medical centers becomes most apparent. In times of peace, we are often reminded by our veterans of the commitment we have made to them. And I have tried to live up to that commitment during the 2 years I have served in the Senate by supporting strong funding for veterans health care. But in times of wars, Mr. President, the whole country wakes up to the debt we owe our warriors. I hope that through this conflict we will forge in our communities, in our Congress, and in our country, a stronger commitment to supporting veterans health care. Veterans who have been injured while fighting on our behalf deserve the best medical care possible, and it is our job to see that they get it. The COLA we consider today, and the agent orange bill we will consider next week, should only be a small sign of our continuing efforts on veteran's behalf.

Mr. ADAMS. Mr. President, we are all aware of the tremendous sacrifices being made by U.S. troops now serving in the Persian Gulf. As a veteran myself, I know that these sacrifices are predicated on an unshakable belief in the values we hold dear as a Nation. I am proud of our troops, and particularly proud of the thousands of men and women from Washington State presently serving in the gulf. At this time, we stand united in prayer for their safety and well being.

It is appropriate, therefore, as we enter the second week of war with Iraq, that Congress work quickly to pass a cost-of-living-allowance increase for America's veterans disabled during our Nation's past wars. Our disabled veterans made incredible sacrifices for their country, and their sacrifices should be rewarded with continued care and appropriate compensation. Of equal importance, as we face the

possibility of a whole new generation of veterans, we must send an unequivocal message to our troops in the Persian Gulf: That they have our full support, both during and after the present conflict, and that their efforts on behalf of the United States will not be forgotten. Our message to Washington State's veterans, over 594,000 men and women who served our country in past wars, must be equally strong.

I am proud to support H.R. 3, the Veterans Compensation Amendments. H.R. 3 will increase the monthly rates of disability compensation, and dependency and indemnity compensation, by 5.4 percent, a full COLA increase. This increase will be made retroactive to January 1, 1991, when all other Federal COLA increases went into effect. Nothing less is deserved by our veterans. Quick consideration and passage of this bill is incumbent on all of us here today.

The failure to pass a COLA increase for disabled veterans at the end of the 101st Congress, the result of controversy over agent orange provisions contained in the COLA bill, was a grave injustice. In order to avoid similar entanglements this year, and further delay the COLA increase, I have become an original cosponsor of S. 238, the Agent Orange Act of 1991. This bill will establish a presumption of service-connection for diseases found to be linked to agent orange exposure by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and gives the Secretary greater authority to determine such links. A clean bill for agent orange compensation and the COLA increase will ensure quick action on both issues. As we must act quickly to pass the COLA increase, we must also act to close this final and often divisive issue for Vietnam-era veterans.

We owe a tremendous debt to our Nation's veterans, past, present and future. I do not take that debt lightly. I have always believed that we should provide the highest quality health care to our Nation's veterans, and will make every effort to see that these bills are considered and passed as quickly as possible. Our Nation's veterans must be certain of our unwavering support.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I want to outline my reasons for strongly supporting swift passage of H.R. 3, legislation providing a 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA] to disabled veterans, as well as to the families of those who died from service-related injuries. This legislation would provide the COLA retroactively.

The 101st Congress failed to pass the COLA due to an impasse over an agent orange provision. Now that the agent orange elements are being addressed separately, Congress must act quickly to provide our 2.5 million disabled veterans and their survivors with the cost-of-living adjustment. These veterans who served our Nation with honor have earned the respect of

the American people and deserve this increase in their benefits.

The House of Representatives passed this legislation earlier this week, and now it is incumbent upon the Senate to acknowledge our country's obligation to its veterans. I praise Senator CRANSTON's efforts toward this end and join him in urging expeditious passage of this bill to rectify the inaction of the 101st Congress.

We must send an unequivocal message of support for those who have fought for our Nation. At a moment when so many young Americans risk injury and death in the gulf, now is the time to demonstrate our support for all Americans who serve in time of war. This legislation is a just and overdue tribute to their sacrifice and service.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I am happy to see that Congress is finally moving to set straight the injustice we committed last fall by not passing legislation to give disabled veterans a 5.4-percent adjustment in their compensation to reflect the effect of inflation.

The Senate Democratic leadership tried to pass the adjustment last fall but was thwarted by Members concerned about the inclusion of certain provisions in the bill. Due to these problems, veterans were the only group not to receive an inflation adjustment last year. This was wrong and it must be righted.

I cannot think of a group of more deserving Americans than those who fought for America and in the process lost some aspect of their health. The war in the Persian Gulf should serve to remind all of us of the incredible sacrifice our disabled veterans have made and of the value of the contribution they made to preserve our democratic ideals and freedom.

My colleagues who worked out the compromise that allows the so-called COLA legislation to go through Congress without any other legislation attached to it are to be commended. Legislation to deal with important issues relating to agent orange will be addressed separately.

Mr. President, one last issue. The disabled veterans cost-of-living adjustment is one of the few inflation adjustments that is not indexed—or adjusted automatically to reflect changes in the economy. I would like to ask my colleagues whether it is not time to consider making the disabled veterans adjustment automatic also.

Mr. President, Congress owes our veterans community an apology for not completing action on the COLA last fall. Let us hope that this untenable situation never again occurs.

Finally, let me honor all of our current veterans and honor all the men and women serving our Nation today who will be veterans in the future.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, as we consider H.R. 3, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, I am reminded of words uttered by

Theodore Roosevelt more than 87 years ago in a Fourth of July speech at Springfield, IL. In 1903, Theodore Roosevelt stated,

A man who is good enough to shed blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards.

I believe strongly in those words, and I have endeavored throughout my service in Congress to ensure that our Nation's veterans receive a "square deal."

Our veterans are men and women who have given much of their selves, their lives, and their families' lives to our country. Our Nation's veterans served in two world wars, the Korean war, Vietnam, Grenada, Beirut, Panama, and most recently the war in the Persian Gulf. These men and women may be disabled, traumatized, or ill in our veterans' hospitals.

Therefore, I am pleased that one of the first pieces of legislation that the 102d Congress sends to the President will be the measure before us. I am pleased that we are finally passing legislation that would give our veterans and their families a well-deserved 5.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment, retroactive to January 1 of this year. I support our Nation's veterans, and I support H.R. 3. The war in the Persian Gulf makes us especially aware of the risks and dangers that these men and women have taken in our behalf.

Mr. SASSER. Mr. President, I am pleased that after several months of waiting our veterans are going to receive their much deserved cost-of-living allowances, and that their COLA payments will be retroactive to January 1. It is most unfortunate that retirement benefits to such an elite group of our Nation's retirees have been delayed when all other retirees received their increases on time.

As part of our Armed Forces, Mr. President, our veterans were called on to put themselves in great peril, often making life-threatening sacrifices for the safety and betterment of our Nation. It is the least we can do, now that they are retired, to see that they receive the fair and just benefits they deserve.

Even as I speak, hundreds of thousands of our Nation's young men and women are serving their country in the Middle East. Let us be mindful that the veterans whose COLA's we are authorizing today have also served the United States of America in foreign lands from Europe to Asia to Africa, Vietnam, and Korea, as well as Grenada and Panama.

And let us send a signal to our troops serving today that when the fighting is over and they reach retirement age, they will be cared for by an appreciative nation that remembers and honors their dedication and sacrifice.

I know that a lot of hard work and compromise has gone into this bill on both sides of the aisle. My compliments to Chairman CRANSTON and his

staff who have worked so diligently to get this final version before us.

The Senate Budget Committee has examined the budgetary implications of H.R. 3 both for compliance with Budget Act points of order and for any implications under the new pay-as-you-go procedures enacted in last year's reconciliation bill.

We concur with the cost estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office on January 4, 1991, which states that, "Since the compensation cost-of-living allowance was included in the existing baseline, this bill would have no cost relative to that baseline." The spending increases from the COLA are also included in the baseline which will be used for measuring changes relative to the new pay-as-you-go procedures. Therefore, there are no Budget Act points of order against this bill and the bill has no pay-as-you-go implications.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, I rise in support of this legislation, which restores a 5.4-percent COLA to this country's veterans.

As we all know, the veterans were singled out last year as the only group who did not receive a COLA in the 1991 budget. I am pleased that this situation is being resolved at the earliest time in the 102d Congress, making it retroactive to January 1991.

I have always favored equal treatment among retirees, be they disabled veterans, military retirees, or Social Security recipients. To give a COLA to any one group and not the others is completely unacceptable, and I would like to extend my apology to the veterans as should the entire 101st Congress. They have served this country well and certainly deserve just treatment. To have neglected them during the budget process was intolerable.

I have heard from many veterans in my State of Idaho on this issue, as I am sure many Senators have, and I appreciate their comments and frankness. I believe all of us in Congress need a little nudge now and then to keep us on our toes and remind us of the sacrifices made by so many to protect the freedoms we civilians often take for granted. I am extremely proud of this country and the men and women who have served it in the past and those who serve it now.

I am pleased my colleagues have agreed to early passage of the COLA legislation so we may rectify this unfortunate situation as soon as possible.

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, I rise today as an original cosponsor of the "Veterans Compensation Rates Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1991." This important legislation will provide a 5.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment [COLA], retroactive to January 1, 1991, for beneficiaries of service-connected disability compensation and the rates for dependency indemnity compensation [DIC] for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

It is outrageous that this legislation is even necessary. It was the failure of

Congress alone to do its job and approve the 1991 COLA for the more than 2 million service-connected disabled American veterans and DIC beneficiaries before the 101st Congress adjourned. My home State of Florida has the second highest population of individuals receiving these important benefits as well as more than 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans than any other State. These Florida veterans are stunned, and feel genuinely betrayed that Congress bungled the provision of the 1991 COLA. I certainly cannot blame them for these feelings. Indeed, they are justified.

As my colleagues will no doubt recall, the COLA for this purpose was included in a comprehensive veterans medical benefits bill which included provisions associated with housing, employment, salaries of VA physicians, and service-connected designation for exposure to agent orange and ionizing radiation. When this bill came to the floor, there was considerable political maneuvering which resulted in a stalemate, and the bill was not even voted upon.

Attempts were made to bring about a vote on a clean 1991 COLA bill for service-connected disabled veterans and DIC beneficiaries. While I would rather have completed action on the entire bill prior to adjournment, I supported efforts to vote on a clean COLA. But those efforts did not work, and Congress did not vote. Now is the time for Congress to correct the injustice it created by failing to approve this COLA during the closing days of the 101st Congress.

If Congress can grant a 5.4-percent COLA to Federal and other retirees, it surely should have been able to take the same action on behalf of the brave men and women who have risked their lives in the name of freedom. I wholeheartedly urge my colleagues to join me in correcting this injustice by cosponsoring this important legislative initiative.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my strong support for this bill, which would remedy a problem which arose in the waning hours of the last Congress—when Congress was unable to pass a bill to provide a cost-of-living adjustment for disabled veterans and their survivors.

I have cosponsored the Senate versions of this legislation, and I am pleased that we are able to take this up at this early date.

There has been considerable misunderstanding and posturing about how it came to pass that the veterans did not get their cost-of-living adjustment, and I have even heard my name bandied about as the culprit, but I want to dispel that false impression one more time.

Last year, a bill to provide a cost-of-living adjustment for veterans never came up in the Senate. There were two reasons for that.

The first is that the bill which contained that COLA also contained a number of highly objectionable, wholly unnecessary, costly, and burdensome provisions. Efforts were underway to come to an accommodation and compromise on those provisions when time ran out.

The problem was that the veterans COLA bill has come to be regarded as a run-away freight train to which all sorts of other matters—some worthwhile and others less so—could be attached.

The time had come to stop the old fast freight and to unload some of its excess baggage.

That is exactly what happened, but the haulers of all that excess baggage preferred to let disabled veterans do without their COLA than to let the bill proceed with only slightly modified content.

The second reason that no COLA bill was ever considered in the Senate was because of action taken in the House.

My fine and longtime friend, Chairman SONNY MONTGOMERY made an earnest effort to bring up a bill that would have contained the cost-of-living adjustment and would have extended eligibility for VA medical care to veterans exposed to agent orange.

I had pledged my support for such a bill, but the Senate never had an opportunity to vote on it, because a certain single Congressman rose to object to any consideration of that measure.

Therefore, Mr. President, I am very pleased that we are taking up this measure at this time.

In the intervening months, agreement has been reached—and it is far from perfect, but it is a good compromise—on one of the more contentious issues which hindered our consideration of the veterans' COLA last year, and that is in regard to further agent orange legislation.

I am pleased to see that we are able to take up this bill to provide a COLA for veterans without having to consider any other extraneous matters.

I would also note, Mr. President, that I have introduced a bill, together with the Senator from Kansas [Mr. DOLE] and Senators SPECTER, MURKOWSKI, and eight of our colleagues, that would eliminate this kind of baffling uncertainty for veterans in the future.

My legislation would provide that disabled veterans and their survivors would receive a cost-of-living adjustment annually—automatically—based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index, without Congress having to pass this form of legislation each year.

This bill is very necessary at this time in order to remedy the unfortunate situation of veterans not having received a cost-of-living adjustment and that unfortunate result was not occasioned by the Senator from Wyoming. You could check on a certain House Member for any future information.

The bill I have introduced is necessary to see that veterans never again have to face that troubling indecision again.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, these days when the whole Nation is united in support of our service men and women who are giving such an outstanding account of themselves in the gulf conflict, it is particularly timely and justified for Congress to take up legislation that provide for our soldiers on active duty, as well as for veterans of previous wars.

One shortcoming of our session that ended last October was the failure to pass important pieces of legislation that provide for veterans' care and for the updating of the tax and civil relief provisions of existing law for active duty personnel. The two bills before us, H.R. 3 and 4, rectify some of these omissions.

H.R. 3 makes up for our failure to raise the cost-of-living adjustment rate during last fall's session. This raise is now retroactive to January 1, and applies to veterans disability compensation, and dependency and indemnity compensation.

Mr. President, the last thing one of our service men or women should worry about while engaged in combat in the gulf area is tax obligations left behind. H.R. 4 provides extensive deferrals to ease the burden on our service personnel and their families at home.

Mr. President, our prompt passage of these two bills is just a small token of our Nation's well-founded gratitude to our soldiers, sailors, and veterans.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today the Senate is considering important legislation to many of our Nation's veterans and their families—the Veterans Compensation Amendments of 1991.

When Congress failed to provide disabled veterans and their dependents with a COLA prior to the adjournment of the 101st Congress, we were failing to provide for some of our most deserving citizens. I think I speak for all my colleagues in expressing regret for any difficulty or anxiety we may have caused these veterans and their families.

The bill before us is testament of the Senate's commitment to our vets. By voting today, we send a clear message to these citizens—we remember your sacrifices and unwavering dedication to the United States.

As we follow developments in Operation Desert Storm, let us not forget, Mr. President, that many of America's veterans have also seen the horror of combat. They are familiar with the fear and uncertainty of war. Let us never forget the sacrifices they have made for our great Nation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I am pleased that one of the first orders of business in the 102d Congress will be a 6.4-percent cost-of-living adjustment for disabled veterans. Disabled veterans in Vermont, and across the coun-

try, were justifiably upset that a veterans COLA was not passed in the final days of the 101st Congress.

Veterans from all corners of Vermont have contacted me to express their outrage that, in a year when other Federal pensioners received COLA's, veterans did not. I want to work to maintain their confidence in Government and show that we are responsive to their needs.

In the past few months we have sent thousands of men and women to the Persian Gulf to carry out Operation Desert Shield. At this time, their well-being is uncertain and we can only guess when these troops will be brought home. We cannot imagine the fears and anxieties that run through their minds at this time. It is crucial that Congress demonstrate to these troops that their sacrifices will not be forgotten by this country in the future. This can best be done by caring for the veterans that have already given of themselves in the previous wars and conflicts that the United States has entered into.

I am hopeful that passage of this retroactive COLA will be the first of many initiatives in the 102d Congress recognizing the service of our veterans. In the months ahead, this body must address such issues as agent orange compensation for veterans who were exposed to the defoliant while in Vietnam and measures strengthening the VA health care system, ensuring prompt and sound health care for our veterans.

Mr. President, I strongly support the passage of this retroactive cost-of-living adjustment for disabled veterans.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator SIMPSON has 8 minutes.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, there is no one else on this side of the aisle who wishes to speak. I contacted those Senators who had time reserved. It will not be necessary to use floor time. If there is no further business, I see that in just a moment or two we will pass the 45 minutes allotted. If all time can be yielded back, and conclude consideration of this bill, that would be the disposition of this Senator.

Mr. DeCONCINI. The Senator from Arizona yields back any time, if there is any time left.

Mr. SPECTER. I yield the remainder of the time on this side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PERFORMING CERTAIN ACTS UNDER THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE FOR DESERT SHIELD PERSONNEL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report H.R. 4.

Congress last year. These are issues that deserve our utmost time and attention, and I am committed to passing the best legislation that we possibly can. Our veterans have shown us their support by serving their country with honor; let's return the favor by showing our support for them.

To the extent I did not use my full 5 minutes, I yield it to the Republican leader for further use as he may see fit.

I yield the floor.

Mr. PACKWOOD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. PACKWOOD. Mr. President, I ask for 2 minutes.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, on behalf of the distinguished Republican leader, I yield 2 minutes.

Mr. PACKWOOD. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in support of our men and women serving in the Persian Gulf. This legislation, to delay the time in which they have to file their returns, may seem insignificant to many Americans, but it is not insignificant to those who are doing their first and primary duty of guarding us and our national interests in the Persian Gulf.

I would like to point out, that this legislation applies only to Federal law, not to State law. Fortunately, my State of Oregon follows the Federal rules. Oregonians serving in Desert Storm, should automatically receive an extension for filing their Oregon tax returns.

I hope, however, that other State legislatures—and they are all now in session—will very quickly enact laws similar to that which we will soon enact here, if their States do not automatically follow the Federal rules on these kinds of deadlines.

Just as our men and women serving in the Persian Gulf have a duty and obligation to protect our national interests, we have a responsibility to ease their burdens while they are performing that duty. I am, delighted to support this bill.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, with the authority of the Republican leader, I yield 2 minutes of his time to the Senator from Alaska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. STEVENS pertaining to the introduction of Senate Joint Resolution 46 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on

Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON H.R. 4

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on the third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass? The yeas and nays have been recorded and the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from California [Mr. CRANSTON] is absent because of illness.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Adams	Fowler	Metzenbaum
Akaka	Garn	Mikulski
Baucus	Glenn	Mitchell
Bentsen	Gore	Moynihan
Biden	Gorton	Murkowski
Bingaman	Graham	Nickles
Bond	Gramm	Nunn
Boren	Grassley	Packwood
Bradley	Harkin	Pell
Breaux	Hatch	Pressler
Brown	Hatfield	Pryor
Bryan	Heflin	Reid
Bumpers	Heinz	Riegle
Burdick	Helms	Robb
Burns	Hollings	Rockefeller
Byrd	Inouye	Roth
Chafee	Jeffords	Rudman
Coats	Johnston	Sanford
Cochran	Kassebaum	Sarbanes
Cohen	Kasten	Sasser
Conrad	Kennedy	Seymour
Craig	Kerrey	Shelby
D'Amato	Kerry	Simon
Danforth	Kohl	Simpson
Daschle	Lautenberg	Smith
DeConcini	Leahy	Specter
Dixon	Levin	Stevens
Dodd	Lieberman	Symms
Dole	Lott	Thurmond
Domenici	Lugar	Wallop
Durenberger	Mack	Warner
Exon	McCain	Wellstone
Ford	McConnell	Wirth

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—1

Cranston

So, the bill (H.R. 4) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the previous order, the clerk will read the bill, H.R. 3, for a third time.

The bill (H.R. 3) was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. President, may we have order in the Senate?

Mr. President, for the information of Senators, under the order, this vote

and the succeeding four votes will be 10 minutes in length. Senators should be aware of that. This vote and the succeeding votes will be 10 minutes in length.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

VOTE ON H.R. 3

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The yeas and nays have been ordered on this vote. As has been stated by the majority leader, this will be a 10-minute vote.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from California [Mr. CRANSTON] is absent because of illness.

The result was announced, yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 5 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Adams	Fowler	Metzenbaum
Akaka	Garn	Mikulski
Baucus	Glenn	Mitchell
Bentsen	Gore	Moynihan
Biden	Gorton	Murkowski
Bingaman	Graham	Nickles
Bond	Gramm	Nunn
Boren	Grassley	Packwood
Bradley	Harkin	Pell
Breaux	Hatch	Pressler
Brown	Hatfield	Pryor
Bryan	Heflin	Reid
Bumpers	Heinz	Riegle
Burdick	Helms	Robb
Burns	Hollings	Rockefeller
Byrd	Inouye	Roth
Chafee	Jeffords	Rudman
Coats	Johnston	Sanford
Cochran	Kassebaum	Sarbanes
Cohen	Kasten	Sasser
Conrad	Kennedy	Seymour
Craig	Kerrey	Shelby
D'Amato	Kerry	Simon
Danforth	Kohl	Simpson
Daschle	Lautenberg	Smith
DeConcini	Leahy	Specter
Dixon	Levin	Stevens
Dodd	Lieberman	Symms
Dole	Lott	Thurmond
Domenici	Lugar	Wallop
Durenberger	Mack	Warner
Exon	McCain	Wellstone
Ford	McConnell	Wirth

NAYS—0

NOT VOTING—1

Cranston

So the bill (H.R. 3) was passed.

VOTE ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 6

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 6) concerning the crisis in the Baltic States.

The yeas and nays have been ordered, with a 10-minute rollcall vote. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from California [Mr. CRANSTON] is absent because of illness.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

102D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3

To amend title 38, United States Code, to revise, effective as of January 1, 1991, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of such veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 3, 1991

Mr. MONTGOMERY (for himself, Mr. STUMP, Mr. EDWARDS of California, Mr. HAMMERSCHMIDT, Mr. APPLGATE, Mr. WYLIE, Mr. PENNY, Mr. McEWEN, Mr. ROWLAND, Mr. BURTON, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. RIDGE, Mrs. PATTERSON, Mr. JAMES, Mr. PAYNE of Virginia, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. PARKER, Mr. PAXON, Mr. JONES of Georgia, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GEREN, Mr. MAZZOLI, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. MRAZEK, Mr. SHAW, Mr. PRICE, Mr. YATRON, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. BATEMAN, Mr. ROSTENKOWSKI, Mr. TALLON, Mr. IRELAND, Mr. SLATTERY, Mr. RUSSO, Mr. GINGRICH, Mr. VOLKMER, Mr. MACHTLEY, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. McMILLEN of Maryland, Mr. GALLO, Mr. SYNAR, Mr. WELDON, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. ANNUNZIO, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. SISISKY, Mr. DORNAN of California, Mr. BARNARD, Mr. TANNER, Mr. RAVENEL, Mr. THOMAS of Georgia, Mr. TRAFICANT, Mr. STARK, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. WALSH, Mr. GOSS, Mr. HATCHER, Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mr. DICKS, Mr. LEACH, Mr. DAVIS, Mr. HORTON, Mr. SWIFT, Mr. COMBEST, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. GLICKMAN, Mr. MARTIN, Mr. HUTTO, Mr. FEIGHAN, Mr. FIELDS, Mr. HOYER, Mr. McHUGH, Mr. HENRY, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. COLEMAN of Texas, Mr. DICKINSON, Mr. MOAKLEY, Mr. McDADE, Mr. HUBBARD, Mr. VANDER JAGT, Mr. NOWAK, Mr. HEFNER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HAMILTON, Mr. LANCASTER, Mr. COBLE, Mr. RAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. McCLOSKEY, Mr. CONTE, Mr. CALLAHAN, Mr. KYL, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. WOLF, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. DERRICK, Mr. PERKINS, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. ATKINS, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. EDWARDS of Texas, Mr. FAWELL, Mr. GREEN of New York, Mr. DORGAN of North Dakota, Mr. ECKART, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. FUSTER, Mr. HALL of Ohio, Mr. RINALDO, Mr. MAVROULES, Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. MANTON, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. JACOBS, Mr. ROTH, Mr. DE LA GARZA, Mr. GAYDOS, Mr. JENKINS, Mr. TRAXLER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. MARLENEE, Ms. OAKAR, Mr. SKAGGS, Mr. FALCOMAEGA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. SKEEN, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. TORRES, Mr. GIBBONS,



1 (b) REFERENCES TO TITLE 38.—Whenever in this Act
2 an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amend-
3 ment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the refer-
4 ence shall be considered to be made to a section or other
5 provision of title 38, United States Code.

6 SEC. 2. DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

7 (a) 5.4-PERCENT INCREASE.—Section 314 is
8 amended—

9 (1) by striking out “\$76” in subsection (a) and in-
10 inserting in lieu thereof “\$80”;

11 (2) by striking out “\$144” in subsection (b) and
12 inserting in lieu thereof “\$151”;

13 (3) by striking out “\$220” in subsection (c) and
14 inserting in lieu thereof “\$231”;

15 (4) by striking out “\$314” in subsection (d) and
16 inserting in lieu thereof “\$330”;

17 (5) by striking out “\$446” in subsection (e) and
18 inserting in lieu thereof “\$470”;

19 (6) by striking out “\$562” in subsection (f) and
20 inserting in lieu thereof “\$592”;

21 (7) by striking out “\$710” in subsection (g) and
22 inserting in lieu thereof “\$748”;

23 (8) by striking out “\$821” in subsection (h) and
24 inserting in lieu thereof “\$865”;

1 (9) by striking out "\$925" in subsection (i) and
2 inserting in lieu thereof "\$974";

3 (10) by striking out "\$1,537" in subsection (j) and
4 inserting in lieu thereof "\$1,620";

5 (11) by striking out "\$1,911" and "\$2,679" in
6 subsection (k) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,014"
7 and "\$2,823", respectively;

8 (12) by striking out "\$1,911" in subsection (l) and
9 inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,014";

10 (13) by striking out "\$2,107" in subsection (m)
11 and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,220";

12 (14) by striking out "\$2,397" in subsection (n)
13 and inserting in lieu thereof "\$2,526";

14 (15) by striking out "\$2,679" each place it ap-
15 pears in subsections (o) and (p) and inserting in lieu
16 thereof "\$2,823";

17 (16) by striking out "\$1,150" and "\$1,713" in
18 subsection (r) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$1,212"
19 and "\$1,805", respectively; and

20 (17) by striking out "\$1,720" in subsection (s)
21 and inserting in lieu thereof "\$1,812".

22 (b) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
23 may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases au-
24 thorized by subsection (a), the rates of disability compensa-
25 tion payable to persons within the purview of section 10 of

1 Public Law 85-857 who are not in receipt of compensation
2 payable pursuant to chapter 11 of title 38, United States
3 Code.

4 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.**

5 Section 315(l) is amended—

6 (1) by striking out “\$92” in clause (A) and insert-
7 ing in lieu thereof “\$96”;

8 (2) by striking out “\$155” and “\$48” in clause
9 (B) and inserting in lieu thereof “\$163” and “\$50”,
10 respectively;

11 (3) by striking out “\$64” and “\$48” in clause (C)
12 and inserting in lieu thereof “\$67” and “\$50”, respec-
13 tively;

14 (4) by striking out “\$74” in clause (D) and insert-
15 ing in lieu thereof “\$77”;

16 (5) by striking out “\$169” in clause (E) and in-
17 serting in lieu thereof “\$178”; and

18 (6) by striking out “\$142” in clause (F) and in-
19 serting in lieu thereof “\$149”.

20 **SEC. 4. CLOTHING ALLOWANCE FOR CERTAIN DISABLED VET-**
21 **ERANS.**

22 Section 362 is amended by striking out “\$414” and in-
23 serting in lieu thereof “\$436”.

1 **SEC. 5. DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION FOR**
 2 **SURVIVING SPOUSES.**

3 Section 411 is amended—

4 (1) by striking out the table in subsection (a) and
 5 inserting in lieu thereof the following:

“Pay grade	Monthly rate	Pay grade	Monthly rate
E-1.....	\$594	W-4.....	\$852
E-2.....	612	O-1.....	752
E-3.....	629	O-2.....	776
E-4.....	668	O-3.....	831
E-5.....	686	O-4.....	879
E-6.....	701	O-5.....	969
E-7.....	735	O-6.....	1,094
E-8.....	776	O-7.....	1,181
E-9.....	¹ 811	O-8.....	1,295
W-1.....	752	O-9.....	1,389
W-2.....	782	O-10.....	² 1,524
W-3.....	805		

“¹ If the veteran served as sergeant major of the Army, senior enlisted advisor of the Navy, chief master sergeant of the Air Force, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, or master chief petty officer of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse’s rate shall be \$875.

“² If the veteran served as Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Naval Operations, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Commandant of the Marine Corps, or Commandant of the Coast Guard, at the applicable time designated by section 402 of this title, the surviving spouse’s rate shall be \$1,633.”;

6 (2) by striking out “\$65” in subsection (b) and in-
 7 serting in lieu thereof “\$68”;

8 (3) by striking out “\$169” in subsection (c) and
 9 inserting in lieu thereof “\$178”; and

10 (4) by striking out “\$83” in subsection (d) and in-
 11 serting in lieu thereof “\$87”.

12 **SEC. 6. DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION FOR**
 13 **CHILDREN.**

14 (a) **DIC FOR ORPHAN CHILDREN.**—Section 413(a) is
 15 amended—

1 (1) by striking out "\$284" in clause (1) and in-
2 serting in lieu thereof "\$299";

3 (2) by striking out "\$409" in clause (2) and in-
4 serting in lieu thereof "\$431";

5 (3) by striking out "\$529" in clause (3) and in-
6 serting in lieu thereof "\$557"; and

7 (4) by striking out "\$529" and "\$105" in clause
8 (4) and inserting in lieu thereof "\$557" and "\$110",
9 respectively.

10 (b) SUPPLEMENTAL DIC FOR DISABLED ADULT CHIL-
11 DREN.—Section 414 is amended—

12 (1) by striking out "\$169" in subsection (a) and
13 inserting in lieu thereof "\$178";

14 (2) by striking out "\$284" in subsection (b) and
15 inserting in lieu thereof "\$299"; and

16 (3) by striking out "\$144" in subsection (c) and
17 inserting in lieu thereof "\$151".

18 **SEC. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE FOR RATE INCREASES.**

19 Section 2(b) and the amendments made by this Act shall
20 take effect as of January 1, 1991.

○

copy M.K. CAM

Document No. 210235SS

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2/5/91

ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY:

4:00PM TODAY, FEB. 5

ENROLLED BILL H.R. 556 -- AGENT ORANGE ACT OF 1991 AND SIGNING STATEMENT

SUBJECT:

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BRADY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMEYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CLERK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOLIDAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

Please provide comments/recommendations on the attached enrolled bill memo and signing statement directly to this office by 4:00PM, TODAY, FEBRUARY 5. Thank you.

RESPONSE:

PHILLIP D. BRADY
Assistant to the President
and Staff Secretary
Ext. 2702



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

91 FEB -5 AM 10:23

THE DIRECTOR

February 5, 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Enrolled Bill H.R. 556 - Agent Orange Act of 1991
Sponsors - Rep. Montgomery (D) MS and 43 others

Last Day for Action

February 15, 1991 - Friday

Purpose

(1) Creates statutory presumptions of service connection for Vietnam veterans who suffer from certain conditions related to Vietnam service, (2) requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to enter into a contract for the review and analysis of scientific literature concerning the potential health effects of herbicide exposure, and (3) authorizes VA to undertake certain Agent Orange research activities.

Agency Recommendations

Office of Management and Budget	Approval (Signing statement attached)
Department of Veterans Affairs	Approval (Signing statement attached)
Department of Justice	No objection (Informally)
Department of Defense	Defers to VA (Informally)
Department of Health and Human Services	Defers to VA (Informally)

Discussion

H.R. 556 is the product of negotiations between the Administration and the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. In a January 29, 1991, letter to Representative Montgomery, Secretary Derwinski indicated that "the President is personally aware of and totally supportive of H.R. 556"

H.R. 556 passed the House by a vote of 412-0 and the Senate by a vote of 99-0.

The most significant features of the enrolled bill are described below. A detailed explanation of the bill's provisions is provided in the section-by-section analysis enclosed with VA's views letter.

Major Provisions of the Enrolled Bill

As enrolled, H.R. 556 would:

- Codify current VA regulations regarding Agent Orange and Vietnam service compensation. The enrolled bill would establish in statute a presumption of service connection for Vietnam veterans who suffer from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, soft-tissue sarcoma, or chloracne. (Chloracne must have developed within one year of the individual leaving Vietnam.)
- Require VA to seek to enter into a contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) for a review and analysis of the scientific evidence concerning the potential health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam. The NAS would be required to transmit to VA and appropriate congressional committees its initial report no later than 18 months after the bill's enactment. The enrolled bill would require follow-up reviews by the NAS at least once every two years for 10 years after the initial report. (The enrolled bill allows VA to choose an alternative contractor, if VA and the NAS are unable to reach an agreement.)
- Create a regulatory procedure for establishing a presumption of service connection for other diseases that VA determines to be related to exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides used in Vietnam. The VA would be required to take into account the reports of the NAS in determining new presumptions of service connection. (The enrolled bill also establishes a mechanism for removing a presumption of service connection, when no longer warranted.)
- Authorize VA to undertake certain Agent Orange research activities, including the compilation of treatment data, tissue archiving, and blood-serum testing. Such activities would not be conducted if VA determines, after considering the NAS report, that the activities are not feasible or cost effective or would not make a

material contribution to current scientific knowledge. In addition, these activities would be subject to the specific appropriation of funds by Congress.

- Extend through December 31, 1993, special eligibility for VA health care for veterans who suffer from disabilities alleged to be related to herbicide exposure or ionizing radiation.
- Eliminate the dioxin review function of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards. (This function would be replaced by the work of the NAS.)

Scoring for the Purposes of Pay-As-You-Go and Budget Caps

H.R. 556 is subject to the pay-as-you-go requirements of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA). This Office must issue an estimate of the change in direct spending resulting from the legislation within five days of enactment. If, at the end of this session of Congress, the net effect of all enacted direct spending and revenue legislation is an addition to the deficit, a sequester of direct spending programs is required.

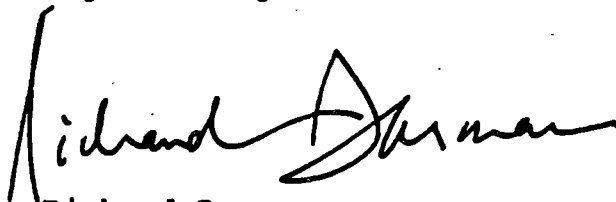
The budget baseline prepared by this Office already incorporates the costs associated with the presumption of service connection for Vietnam veterans who suffer from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, soft-tissue sarcoma, or chloracne. Since the pay-as-you-go requirements are measured against this baseline, enactment of H.R. 556 would be scored as having no effect on the deficit.

Conclusion and Recommendations

VA, in its views letter on H.R. 556, notes that the enrolled bill "represents a compromise which seeks to resolve on a scientific basis the contentious issues relating to dioxin exposure in Vietnam." The Department concludes by stating that "[i]n accordance with the President's previously-expressed support of this measure . . . the Department of Veterans Affairs recommends the President's approval of this bill." Attached to the VA views letter is a proposed signing statement for your consideration.

We join VA in recommending approval of H.R. 556. We have attached to this memorandum an edited version of VA's proposed signing statement, which has been approved by VA. The signing

statement notes that this legislation relies on science to settle the issues concerning dioxin exposure in Vietnam. It also states that H.R. 556 is consistent with the Administration's goal of providing the truth to Vietnam veterans about the effects of exposure to Agent Orange.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Darman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Richard Darman
Director

Enclosures

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased today to sign into law H.R. 556, the "Agent Orange Act of 1991." This legislation relies on science to settle the troubling questions concerning the effect on veterans of exposure to herbicides -- such as Agent Orange -- used during the Vietnam era.

H.R. 556 will have three primary effects:

- It will codify decisions previously made by my Administration with respect to presumptions of service connection related to the Vietnam experience and herbicide exposure.
- It will establish a new procedure for determining whether particular diseases are related to exposure to Agent Orange. This includes calling upon the National Academy of Sciences to study the scientific evidence concerning the potential health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam.
- It will provide a reasoned and scientific basis for determining whether to proceed with further studies concerning the effects of exposure to herbicides. It also will require Congress to enact specific appropriations to fund such additional studies.

The issue of the effects of exposure to Agent Orange is one of deeply-held, but divisive, beliefs. I believe that my

Administration has done an exemplary job in carrying out the mandate of Public Law 98-542, the "Veterans Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act." I want to express my particular thanks to the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards, a Federal advisory committee established by that law. This committee, since its creation in 1985, has done a thoroughly professional job in carrying out its assigned duties.

Nevertheless, I am aware of the concern of some that a non-Governmental review would be of value. Accordingly, I applaud the efforts of Congress to work toward a thoughtful and meaningful compromise of the Agent Orange issue.

My Administration has stated many times one overriding goal in this area -- providing the truth to Vietnam veterans about the effects of exposure to Agent Orange. I believe that this legislation will further that goal, and I am therefore pleased to sign H.R. 556.

5 February 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR MARY KATE GRANT

FROM: JENNIFER GROSSMAN
SUBJECT: BILL SIGNING MATERIAL

WHAT

Remarks will take place in the Roosevelt Room. In attendance will be representatives of twenty-six veteran services organizations, plus six officials from the Administration of Veterans Affairs (including the Secretary). Public Liason says the remarks should recognize the frequent meetings the President has had with these organizations, how the administration has kept the country's veterans informed.

The bills are the Agent Orange Bill, HR556; and the Cost of Living Bill, or COLA, HR3. Ed Timberlake over at Veterans Affairs says that the Secretary thinks that the Agent Orange Bill should overwhelm the remarks, that it is a benchmark in our commitment to meeting soldiers needs. He said some nod should be made to the fact that yes, there has been some contention over this issue, but we've put that behind us with this landmark legislation to help our veterans. In the past, liberal Democrats have used this issue to throw bombs (so to speak) at the Reagan Administration. Also, tie in with Gulf; i.e. "our fighting men and women in the Persian Gulf deserve no less."

QUOTES

- 1) "We revere the Constitution, especially the Preamble--the part that reads 'to promote the generals' welfare.'" --Podium Humor
- 2) "The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten." --Calvin Coolidge, Acceptance of Nomination for Presidency, Cleveland, Ohio, 1920.
- 3) "To look on men who have walked with death,
And have not been afraid."

Grant/Grossman
February 5, 1991
12:30 p.m. / A:VETS

**BRIEF REMARKS: VETERANS BILLS SIGNING
THE ROOSEVELT ROOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1991
11:15 A.M.**

Good morning. It's a pleasure -- once again -- to have so many familiar faces here today, [acknowledgements/joke].

From Midway to Normandy; from Inchon to Khe Sahn; to last week's battle of Khafji, American Marines, soldiers, airmen, sailors and Coastguardsmen have given 'their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor' to keep freedom safe. We are fighting for peace today as they did then, because America must lead, as we always have.

All of you -- all of us -- have seen combat, that most gut wrenching of all human experiences. And not one of us will ever forget it. But we are here today to ensure that our nation will ever remember those who defended her -- the men and women who stood where duty required them to stand.

It is my honor today to sign into law two bills which give veterans and their families the compensation they deserve. The first, HR 3, provides for a 1991 cost-of-living adjustment; the second, HR 556, gives monies for compensation and research for veterans suffering from diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of the Veterans Affairs Administration, as well as the Congress in the tough negotiations over this legislation. And I want to salute those who ensured

that in the end, a bipartisan spirit prevailed to pass this important legislation. These two bills meet the urgent needs of our veterans -- and will build the confidence of tomorrow's veterans that they and their loved ones will not be forgotten.

A grateful nation salutes all our veterans for the difference they have made in the history of this country, and of the world. Our allied forces are sacrificing much today in pursuit of peace tomorrow. Their cause is just and noble, and the American people are behind them foursquare. I think everyone in this room is as proud of them as I am. //

And while their mission is a difficult and demanding one, not one man or woman serving in the Persian Gulf will not have to fight with one hand tied behind their back -- nor will they stay there one day longer than absolutely necessary. //

Each and every one of them has volunteered to stand against a dictator who must be stopped; each has gone to stand up for what is moral and right in the world. The brave men and women of Desert Storm know -- as we knew when we faced similar evils in our time -- that when the forces of aggression arise, America stands ready to do the hard work of freedom.

Thank you, and God bless each and every one of you.

Now I will sign these bills into law.

#