

STATEMENT BY  
CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
MARCH 23, 1965

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate this opportunity to express my views concerning the proposal to close various Veterans Administration facilities.

Many veterans, veterans organizations and other interested persons have contacted me in recent weeks, expressing deep concern over the implications of this order. I am certain every Member of Congress has had a similar experience. Those contacting me are particularly concerned about curtailing hospital and domiciliary care fearing it will set a precedent for additional closings at the very time more veterans need hospitalization or domiciliary care.

There is no objection to economy in government, but serious doubts have been raised regarding the wisdom of closing facilities established to administer to the needs of those disabled veterans requiring medical attention. There is concern also as to what may happen to those who require domiciliary care - those unable to care for themselves.

Mr. Chairman, I am frequently contacted by the family or friends of an ailing veteran in need of hospitalization, for assistance in gaining admission to a VA hospital. Often beds are not available, and it would seem these conditions could worsen if the President's order is implemented.

Mr. Chairman, veterans as well as all other taxpayers, desire efficiency and economy in government. They do not however, desire ill-considered action taken which may result in curtailing proper services to our veterans.

I am appearing here this morning to express my interest and concern in this important matter. It seems obvious that Congress has an obligation to independently determine whether the announced closings will in any way affect services veterans are properly entitled to and whether there will be an actual savings if the closing order is carried out.

I am confident the Members of the Committee will make a proper determination after full consideration of all the facts. Let us not knowingly surrender more rights and prerogatives to the Executive branch of our government.