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The NCOA has shown that the private sector has an important role to perform in the area of veterans employment regardless of what government does. 68 employers are represented here. These firms know that hiring a Vet is a bargain.

RESERVES REPRESENTED TODAY

One employer here today shows special optimism at being attractive to veterans--the U.S. Army Reserve. I have been active in supporting the Reserve Program, especially the Naval Reserve.

It appears this year that we will have to resist another effort to reduce the Naval Reserve in the 1979 budget. The Reserve is a cost-effective way to maintain necessary manpower strength. The cost per reservist is about 1/5 to 1/6 of what it costs to maintain comparable active duty personnel. Reserves are only a part of our overall defense posture.

DEFENSE MOST IMPORTANT DOMESTIC PROGRAM

Veterans have a unique perspective on the military needs of our country. They agree that defense is our most important domestic program. I am of the firm opinion that this country should never be number two in defense.

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Some of the employers here are part of the defense community. Their close association with the military has convinced them of the value of hiring veterans.

I am equally glad to see other employers here who do not have a large amount of government work. The skills of a veterans are valuable in any type of business.

Those veterans who will come here today have proven their abilities in the service of their country. They have received training not only in specific job skills but also in responsibility and pride in their work.

These employers have come to this Seminar with job openings -- hopefully many of them. These veterans have come with something to offer also-- men ready and willing to work to the best of their abilities. By bringing these two groups together, the NCOA does a service to both.

I want to thank the Non-Commissioned Officers Association and the employers who have joined together to bring our veterans a VIP Program -- Veterans plus Industry equals Placement.

It is through such spirit, devotion, and desire that these two groups have come together to find employment - good employment - for the nation's veterans.

My best wishes to them, and my best wishes to you.

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