

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE  
AT THE  
MOBILE VAN DEDICATION DAY  
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
STATE HOUSE - TOPEKA, KANSAS  
JULY 8, 1974

LET ME EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY  
TO SPEAK HERE TODAY.

IT IS AN HONOR TO ATTEND THE KICK-OFF CEREMONY FOR THESE  
MOBILE VAN UNITS. YOUR EFFORTS TO EXTEND ASSISTANCE TO YOUR  
FELLOW VETERANS IS TO BE HIGHLY COMMENDED. THE HELP TO BE PROVIDED  
KANSAS VETERANS BY THE D.A.V. NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS IN THESE  
VANS IS ONE OF THE FINEST EXAMPLES OF VETERANS HELPING EACH OTHER.

GREATER PARTICIPATION NEEDED

IT IS ESPECIALLY INSPIRING TO SEE VETERANS HELPING OTHER  
VETERANS, GIVEN THE ATMOSPHERE THROUGHOUT THE NATION TODAY. IN  
THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, WE HAVE SEEN THE INTEGRITY OF MANY OF OUR  
PUBLIC LEADERS AND INSTITUTIONS CHALLENGED. THE RESULT, AS WE HAVE  
SEEN IN RECENT OPINION POLLS, HAS BEEN AN INCREASING LACK OF  
CREDIBILITY FOR PUBLIC OFFICES.

SUCH AN ATTITUDE CAN ONLY BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE NATION AND OUR SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. IT MEANS THAT FEWER HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES ARE STEPPING FORWARD TO COMPETE FOR OFFICES OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE. WE HAVE SEEN RESIGNATIONS OF APPOINTED OFFICIALS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TOUCHED BY POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING RELUCTANCE OF HIGH CALIBER PEOPLE TO ACCEPT POSITIONS OF PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY. A CONTINUATION OF THIS TREND IS LIKELY TO CAUSE A DECLINE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR ADMINISTRATIVE AND ELECTED OFFICIALS.

WHAT WE NEED IS MORE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, NOT LESS. THE DIFFICULTIES AND WEAKNESSES OF OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT CAN BE BEST RESOLVED BY THE EFFORTS OF OUR MOST HIGHLY QUALIFIED LEADERS. IN THIS TIME OF CONTROVERSY AND DOUBT, OUR COUNTRY NEEDS THE INTEREST AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES OF OUR BEST CITIZENS.

I BELIEVE THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, THROUGH THESE MOBILE FIELD UNITS, ARE MAKING AN EFFORT TO TAKE A LARGER ROLE IN RESOLVING THE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF OUR VETERANS. ACTIVITIES OF THIS NATURE ARE IMPORTANT AND HIGHLY COMMENDABLE.

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VETERANS NEED MORE OF THE KIND HELP WITH THEIR CLAIMS THESE DAYS, SUCH AS THE D.A.V. IS PROVIDING. AS THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY HAS GROWN, THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM OF GETTING ASSISTANCE FROM AN UNSEEN BUREAUCRAT HAS BECOME EVEN MORE DIFFICULT. AN OFFICIAL IN A BIG OFFICE BUILDING A HUNDRED OR A THOUSAND MILES AWAY TENDS TO HAVE NO CONCEPTION OF THE HUMAN NEEDS OF A VETERAN SENDING IN AN APPLICATION FOR HIS RIGHTFUL BENEFITS.

IN AN EFFORT TO DIRECT MORE ATTENTION AND IMPROVE THE RESPONSIVENESS TO THE NEEDS OF VETERANS, I RECENTLY INTRODUCED A BILL IN THE SENATE TO RAISE THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION TO CABINET-LEVEL STATUS. CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WOULD INCREASE THE PRIORITY OF SERVICES TO VETERANS AND HOPEFULLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF BENEFITS PROVIDED THEM.

THE V.A. NOW HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR A TREMENDOUS RANGE OF SERVICES TO VETERANS, FROM EDUCATION TO ADMINISTRATION OF OVER 100 NATIONAL CEMETERIES. THESE ACTIVITIES DIRECTLY AFFECT THE LIVES OF OVER 29 MILLION AMERICAN VETERANS, AND INDIRECTLY INFLUENCE THE LIVES OF NEARLY ONE-HALF OUR ENTIRE POPULATION, WHEN VETERANS' DEPENDENTS ARE COUNTED.

THE V. A. PRESENTLY IS THE SECOND LARGEST FEDERAL EMPLOYER OF ALL AGENCIES, WITH OVER 202,000 EMPLOYEES. THE V. A. BUDGET OF \$13.4 BILLION IS THE THIRD LARGEST OF ALL FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND IT MAY APPROACH \$15 BILLION WITH PROGRAMS ADDED THIS YEAR.

THE SIMPLE FACTS INDICATE THAT ELEVATION OF THE V.A. TO A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IS NECESSARY AND LONG OVERDUE.

#### CONGRESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP

THE EFFORTS OF THE D.A.V. TO ASSIST VETERANS ARE ONE SIDE OF A PARTNERSHIP WITH CONGRESS. THE CONGRESS HAS TAKEN SEVERAL ACTIONS THIS YEAR TO IMPROVE THE RIGHTS AND AWARDS PREVIOUSLY GRANTED TO THEM. I HAVE SUPPORTED THESE EFFORTS AND HAVE INTRODUCED SEVERAL MEASURES OF MY OWN.

RECENTLY, THE CONGRESS PASSED A BILL TO INCREASE THE RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION BY AS MUCH AS 18 PERCENT. IN MY STATEMENT ON THE SENATE FLOOR IN SUPPORT OF THIS BILL, I STATED THAT "THIS COMPENSATION IS ONLY A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR THE LIFE, CAREER AND HAPPINESS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXCEPT FOR THE SACRIFICE MADE IN SERVICE TO THIS NATION." I HOPE THE INCREASE IN COMPENSATION TO DISABLED VETERANS IN KANSAS AND ALL OVER THE NATION WILL HELP THEM LEAD A FULLER AND MORE COMFORTABLE LIFE.

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ANOTHER AREA IN WHICH I HAVE WORKED ESPECIALLY HARD FOR VETERANS IS EDUCATION. THE SENATE RECENTLY PASSED A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION BILL. IT WAS GRATIFYING TO SEE THAT THIS MEASURE CONTAINED SEVERAL OF THE MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE ORIGINAL BILL I HELPED INTRODUCE, INCLUDING TUITION PAYMENTS, INCREASED MONTHLY ASSISTANCE RATES, EXTENDED ELIGIBILITY AND ENTITLEMENT PERIODS, AND A LIBERALIZED WORK-STUDY PROGRAM.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME QUESTION THAT THE TUITION PAYMENTS PROVISION MIGHT BE DROPPED FROM THE SENATE BILL IN THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. I HAVE ALREADY MADE CLEAR MY POSITION THAT THOSE OF US IN CONGRESS WHO BENEFITED FROM TUITION PAYMENTS AFTER WORLD WAR II SHOULD STAND FIRM ON THIS ISSUE.

#### VETERANS DAY

AMONG MY OTHER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE VETERANS BENEFITS, I FEEL THAT RETURNING VETERANS DAY TO ITS TRADITIONAL DATE ON NOVEMBER 11 SHOULD BE HIGH IN PRIORITY. HEARINGS WERE RECENTLY HELD BY THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ON A BILL I INITIALLY INTRODUCED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PURPOSE IN 1971 AND REINTRODUCED IN THE 93rd CONGRESS LAST YEAR. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THIS BILL AFTER ADDITIONAL HEARINGS ARE

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HELD ON JULY 11. I HOPE THE CONGRESS WILL ACT QUICKLY ON THIS ISSUE.

THE VETERANS IN THIS COUNTRY DESERVE TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICES AND SACRIFICES TO THE NATION. RETURNING VETERANS DAY TO ITS TRADITIONAL DATE OF NOVEMBER 11 IS A WAY TO INCREASE THE ATTENTIVENESS TO THE CONCERNS OF VETERANS AS IT PROPERLY SHOULD BE.

SUCH ATTENTIVENESS WOULD HELP IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF SERVICES AND BENEFITS PROVIDED TO VETERANS AS THE D.A.V. IS NOW DOING WITH THESE MOBILE VANS. I BELIEVE THIS PROGRAM IS HIGHLY COMMENDABLE AND WISH THE GREATEST SUCCESS TO THOSE NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS PARTICIPATING IN THIS ENDEAVOR.

AGAIN, LET ME EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO HELP KANSAS VETERANS AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK HERE.

THANK YOU.