that was advanced. These were items edged the problems with the rationale was well aware, during his tenure, thatpert McNamara acknowledging that he the John Quincy Adams Society, Rob-ber history. Just this week, we had before the Campuses around the country at this time but denied at the highest levels of our government Last year, on the eve of the Jackson-Vanik waiver vote, I received a call from Vietnam from my daughter who was visiting. She was struck by the kindness of the Vietnamese people, the beauty of the landscape and as a college student she was not really aware, until her experience in Vietnam, of the tragedy of that conflict. I have in mind today that conversa-tion and her experience as we come for-ward. We are going to talk about trade and economic opportunity, and that is important. We are on the verge of sign-ing a major trade agreement with Viet-nam that will accelerate the economic prospects of that country. We have in the capitol today, Ambassador Pete Peterson, who has performed a tremen-dous service over the last few years in his work in Vietnam. He is arguably the best qualified person in America to bring about the reconciliation. His po-litical and military experience, his pas-sion and his compassion set him apart and make him uniquely qualified. I continue to be amazed at his efforts. We have the opportunity to build on his efforts with the rejection of the disallowal, to make progress on human rights, transparency of economic ac-tivities. We have the opportunity to help in Southeast Asia, the world’s 12th most populous country, hasten their economic progress, but it goes far be-yond that. The defeat of House Resolu-tion 58 will help accelerate the integra-tion of Vietnam into the world econ-omy. It will help open up their society, but more important it will be an oppor-tunity for us here on this floor to ac-knowledge the United States needs to get beyond this terrible legacy of the war. It is more than economics. It is an oppor-tunity for America to get things right. I strongly urge my colleagues to join with us this morning in the Capitol, room H-375. Pete Peterson will be meeting with us individually to talk about his experience, to talk about this opportunity, to give us a chance to not only move Vietnam forward economi-cally but to do what is right by the American people in this conflict. The GAO REPORT CLAIMS VETERANS ADMINISTRATION WASTES MIL-LIONS The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker’s an-nounced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) was recognized during morning hour de-bates for 5 minutes. Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, all of us know that here on the Republican side we are trying to fight to increase the amount of money we give to the Vet-erans Administration because the President’s budget was a flat line budget which did not provide enough money and particularly the fact that there are many more cases of hepatitis C. And we hope to increase cost of living for a lot of the employees, but I wanted to call my colleagues’ attention to a GAO audit that was performed on the Vet-erans Affairs on July 22 that found over the next 5 years as much as $20 billion could be wasted. And I think that is a concern for all of us here in Congress. The Veterans Health Administration is spending one of every four medical care dollars just caring for buildings that are old and obsolete. They spend it to operate and maintain major delivery locations, but these locations have very low occupancy and a lot of unused space. So as I mentioned ear-lier, there is $20 billion that could be saved over the next 5 years. I think many of my colleagues know that the Veterans Health Administra-tion hospital utilization plan has been dropping because the number of pa-tients has gone down. That is right, it has gone from 49,000 patients a day in 1989 to 21,000 in 1998. Almost half of this decline has occurred over the past 3 years. Not only has the hospital utili-zation dropped but the number of hos-pital admissions has decreased from over 1 million in 1989 to about 400,000 in 1998. So that is about a 60 percent drop, Mr. Speaker. By the VA’s own estimates, the vet-eran population is now 25 million and will drop to about 16 million in the year 2020. So I am concerned, I think all of us should be concerned, about those facilities that cost so much to operate. More than 40 percent of the VA health care facilities are over 50 years old and we are just not getting a good bang for the buck for the tax-payers. It cost as much as $1 million a day to run these underutilized and un-used facilities, according to the GAO; and I do not think we should continue to do that. That is why myself and my colleague, the gentleman from Ala-bama (Mr. EVERTT), who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, have held hearings to discuss this and try to correct this egregious use of taxpayers’ money. Let us not forget, of course, that vet-erans pay taxes themselves, so we want