

Around the time Mr. Gagne learned of the cut-off at Beale, he devised a plan to continue providing the medicines that he and his fellow service members needed, a strategy that was as innovative as it was selfless. Len learned of a policy that allowed military retirees whose prescriptions are filled at a base being closed under the Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC, plan to be eligible for permanent mail delivery of prescription medicines. He also learned that McClellan Air Force Base, located nine miles east of Sacramento, would be closing in July of 2000. Though the Rogue Valley retirees lived literally hundreds of miles away from McClellan, Len reasoned that if they could demonstrate their dependence on the pharmacy service at that base, according to the policy, their supply of prescriptions would be secure.

So, Mr. Gagne arranged bus trips to transport groups of retirees to the closing base where they signed statements of dependency on its pharmacy. Again, the people pictured in this photograph on display in the House Chamber are a part of that group that went on the bus trip. Now, we have to understand the distance from Medford, Oregon, to Sacramento is 309 miles, roughly the distance between Washington, D.C. and New Haven, Connecticut, or Greensboro, North Carolina, if one wanted to go south.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, having to go from Washington, D.C. to Connecticut or North Carolina to get your prescriptions filled. Imagine, a nearly 620 mile round trip every time you wanted to go to the drugstore. Well, they chartered buses at \$1,150 per trip, all paid for by themselves; and approximately 40 people at a time made the 16-hour round trip to McClellan, where they got a 3-month supply of medicines and thereby qualified for the BRAC pharmacy benefit.

The retirees and dependents pictured here, many of whom are decorated combat veterans of World War II, are seen standing outside the McClellan clinic during one such trip. I am told that Mr. Gagne's ingenuity in organizing these trips is probably without precedent. No other retirees have ever traveled en masse to a closing base simply to qualify for the BRAC benefit. It goes without saying that it is appalling that these retirees are forced to find loopholes in the system simply to gain what they were promised by this government years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the basic contract that binds a professional military to the government it serves is an uncomplicated one. It is an understanding which assumes that in exchange for a life spent in service to the Nation, the government has certain fundamental obligations to its retirees. In the United States, these obligations have traditionally meant a reasonable retirement wage and promise of lifetime access to

health care. In return, the American people are ensured of their defense by a group whose dedication to duty is the very definition of professionalism throughout the world, a group whose members have laid down their lives by the hundreds of thousands in defense of the ideals and freedoms we so often invoke in this House.

The hallowed bonds between the Government and the military are straining in ways that are becoming ominously apparent with each passing year. This strain is manifest in the thousands of loyal soldiers on food stamps whose condition is often alluded to in this very Chamber, but remains uncorrected. It is obvious in the declining enlistment and re-enlistment rates that have caused a near panic among senior military officials; and I submit to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that a government unconcerned about busloads of aged retirees traveling hundreds of miles at their own expense for basic medicines is not a government committed to strengthening those bonds. For how can we ask our service members to continue to perform their vital duties while the Government fails to uphold its fundamental responsibility to care for those who have served in the past.

It is examples such as the one I have related that compelled me to cosponsor the Keep Our Promise to Americans Military Retirees Act. I urge my colleagues who have not yet done so to join us in advancing this essential piece of legislation. The men and women of the United States military who provide the very blanket of security under which we spend our lives deserve no less. It is nothing short of outrageous that military retirees across this Nation are forced to undergo such adversity simply to get what was promised to them in the first place. I urge my colleagues to restore the military's faith in the government it serves and renew our commitment to our retired service members.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my personal gratitude to Len Gagne and those who assist him and the thousands of men and women like him whose commitment to their comrades is matched only by their devotion to the Nation they so tirelessly serve.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. GIBBONS) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. NEY, for 5 minutes, March 14.

SENATE BILL AND CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REFERRED

A bill and concurrent resolution of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 1653. An act to reauthorize and amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act; to the Committee on Resources.

S. Con. Res. 95. Concurrent resolution commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the Halabja massacre; to the Committee on International Relations.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 376. An act to amend the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to promote competition and privatization in satellite communications, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 14, 2000, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debates.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6544. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Nectarines and Peaches Grown in California; Revision of Reporting Requirements [Docket No. FV99-916-3FR] received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6545. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Salable Quantities and Allotment Percentages for the 2000-2001 Marketing Year [Docket No. FV00-985-1 FR] received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6546. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulations, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule—Rehabilitation Short-Term Training—received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

6547. A letter from the Deputy Executive Secretariat, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's