VETERANS TRAVEL FAIRNESS ACT
HON. BART STUPAK
OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 21, 2000

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, a major issue of concern for veterans and their families in rural areas all around this nation is the long distances they must travel to receive medical care at the VA hospitals. The current VA reimbursement rate for private owned vehicle use is unreasonable and presents a real hardship for many rural veterans, some of whom must travel hundreds of miles to receive care. The issue is especially important now, because of the high price of gasoline.

As many of us know, the cost of driving and maintaining a motor vehicle is significant. The travel reimbursement rate developed for Federal employees reflects these costs. This rate is the established Internal Revenue Service rate, the same, fair rate that we are allowed to claim on our income taxes. Currently, the Veterans Affairs travel reimbursement rate is only 11 cents per mile, compared to a rate of 32.5 cents per mile used by Federal employees and the IRS.

Why should a veteran driving 100 miles across the state for medical care be reimbursed only $11.00, when a Federal employee gets $32.50 for going the same distance to a meeting in his own car? In fact, Department of Veterans Affairs employees themselves get reimbursed at the higher rate, while the clients they serve are expected to travel at a fraction of the cost. It simply does not make sense for the VA to use a different and stingy method to determine reimbursement rates for veterans that are only one-third what is considered reasonable for Federal employees.

I am introducing this bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to provide that the rate of reimbursement for motor vehicle travel regulated under the beneficiary travel program of the Department of Veterans Affairs be the same as the rate for private vehicle reimbursement for Federal employees.

This is an equity issue and also a matter of respect in the way we treat our veterans. Our vets deserve the same travel reimbursement rate as Federal employees. Please join me in supporting this bill.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, June 22, 2000 may be found in the Daily Digest of today’s RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 26
1 p.m.
Aging
To hold hearings on the hardships that dialysis patients endure and the options for improving the government’s oversight.
SD-628
JUNE 27
9:30 a.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-366
Aged Services
To hold hearings on the nominations of Lt. Gen. Tommy R. Franks, United States Army, to be General; and Lt. Gen. William F. Kernan, United States Army, to be General.
SR-222
Rules and Administration
To hold hearings on the operations of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution.
SR-301
10 a.m.
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine reprocessing of single-use medical devices.
SD-430
2 p.m.
Judiciary
Immigration Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the border crisis in Arizona, and the impact on the state and local communities.
SD-226
Judiciary
Administrative Oversight and the Courts Subcommittee
To resume oversight hearings to examine the 1996 campaign finance investigations.
SH-216
2:30 p.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
Energy Research, Development, Production and Regulation Subcommittee
To hold hearings on the April 2000 GAO report entitled “Nuclear Waste Cleanup—DOE’s Paducah Plant Faces Uncertainties and Excludes Costly Cleanup Activities”.
SD-366
JUNE 28
9:30 a.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-366
Environment and Public Works
Business meeting to mark up S. 2497, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvement to rivers and harbors of the United States; and other pending calendar business.
SD-406
10 a.m.
Finance
Business meeting to mark up proposed legislation relating to the marriage tax penalty.
SD-215
Judiciary
To hold hearings on the struggle for justice for former U.S. World War II POW's.
SD-226
11 a.m.
Foreign Relations
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-419
2 p.m.
Judiciary
Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information Subcommittee
To hold hearings on countering the changing threat of international terrorism.
SD-226
Foreign Relations
European Affairs Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the treatment of U.S. business in Central and Eastern Europe.
SD-419
2:30 p.m.
Indian Affairs
To hold hearings on S. 2283, to amend the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century to make certain amendments with respect to Indian tribes.
SR-485
JUNE 29
9:30 a.m.
Governmental Affairs
Investigations Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the nationwide crisis of mortgage fraud.
SD-342

Foreign Relations
To hold hearings on the nomination of Karl William Holmann, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Yugoslav Republic; Howard Franklin Holman, of South Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria; John W. Limbert, of Vermont, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; Roger A. Meece, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi; Donald Y. Yamamoto, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti; and Sharon P. Wilkinson, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique.
SD-419

9:30 a.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-366

Environment and Public Works
Business meeting to mark up S. 2497, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvement to rivers and harbors of the United States; and other pending calendar business.
SD-406

10 a.m.
Finance
Business meeting to mark up proposed legislation relating to the marriage tax penalty.
SD-215

Judiciary
To hold hearings on the struggle for justice for former U.S. World War II POW's.
SD-226

11 a.m.
Foreign Relations
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-419

2 p.m.
Judiciary
Technology, Terrorism, and Government Information Subcommittee
To hold hearings on countering the changing threat of international terrorism.
SD-226

Foreign Relations
European Affairs Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the treatment of U.S. business in Central and Eastern Europe.
SD-419

2:30 p.m.
Indian Affairs
To hold hearings on S. 2283, to amend the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century to make certain amendments with respect to Indian tribes.
SR-485

JUNE 29
9:30 a.m.
Governmental Affairs
Investigations Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the nationwide crisis of mortgage fraud.
SD-342

Foreign Relations
To hold hearings on the nomination of Karl William Holmann, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Yugoslav Republic; Howard Franklin Holman, of South Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria; John W. Limbert, of Vermont, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; Roger A. Meece, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi; Donald Y. Yamamoto, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti; and Sharon P. Wilkinson, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique.
SD-419