

Date 11 Dec Hour

To
WHILE YOU WERE OUT

From Paul Egan

Of Viet Vets of America

Phone () 202-628-2700

| | | | |
|---------------|---|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Telephoned | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Returned Call | Please Call | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Please See Me | Will Call Again | Important | |

Message Re AO

Montgomer - org 91202 road grant
max support clean CO2A
- WO AO - leverage removed
see San Juan link
VIW - no

Am Vets -
Revol A JV 7/11 VFN
Cap Plan Cole w/ AO
Larm Army 203 543 2239
con [unclear] Bot Jan 301 459 9600

AGNET REORDER NO. 50-726



1224 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-5183

(202) 628-2700
(202) 628-5880 fax

40 ft

FAX TRANSMITTAL
COVER SHEET

TO: Adm. Elmo Zumwalt

FROM: Paul S. Egan

DATE: 12/11/90

FAXED BY: _____

SUBJECT: AD / COLA

NUMBER OF PAGES TO FOLLOW: 2

COMMENTS: _____



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
1224 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-5183

(202) 628-2700
(202) 628-5880 fax

December 10, 1990

Dear Representative:

By now, with a bit more than a month having passed since the 101st Congress adjourned, you have undoubtedly heard from one or more of your colleagues and a few of the veterans service organizations that the failure to have cleared for enactment a veterans disability compensation cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) constitutes a breach of faith with veterans so calamitous as to warrant immediate remedial action as the first order of business when the 102nd Congress convenes in early January. The intonation of righteous indignation in this clamoring for early and speedy action on a clean COLA bill is a self serving campaign intended to mislead both you and the at-large veterans community. It is definitely not the sentiment shared either by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) or the nation's largest veterans organization, The American Legion.

What is really at stake here has almost nothing to do with the minor inconvenience of delaying a compensation COLA for a few short months, a COLA that in any event will be retroactively effective to January 1. What is instead at stake are the modest Agent Orange provisions that were narrowly added to the COLA bill, HR.5326, by the House Veterans Affairs Committee on a 16-14 vote against the Chairman's opposition on October 12 and which were passed unanimously by the full House on October 15. The fact is the clamoring you are hearing for speedy action on a COLA bill unencumbered by any other provisions is coming exclusively from the long time opponents of resolving the Agent Orange issue.

What is conspicuously absent from the appeals you are now receiving is the fact that it was a threatened filibuster by Agent Orange compensation opponent, Senator Alan Simpson, with to little time left to invoke cloture that prevented passage of the disability compensation COLA along with myriad other veterans provisions in the closing moments of the 101st Congress. The time pressure will no longer present an obstacle when the 102nd Congress convenes next year. Time to shut down a filibuster will be abundant and no one doubts the necessary votes to invoke cloture will rapidly be cast if needed.

Additionally, it is curious to note that virtually every

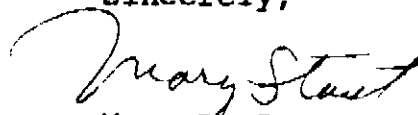
veterans organization operating in the nation's Capitol and both House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees have staked out positions of unambivalent opposition to repeated Administration proposals to automatically index disability compensation COLAs to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The reason for this opposition is that the annual need to clear a COLA bill in each body constitutes the locomotive pulling the entire veterans legislation train every year. Those who now call for uncoupling the Agent Orange provisions from the COLA bill cannot have it both ways. Their appeals are both contradictory and self serving and must be denied.

The cost of the Agent Orange provisions adopted by the House in October and pending in the Senate prior to adjournment is a modest \$1 million over the course of 10 years. Cost, then, cannot be legitimately raised as an objection. What elevates the bile of those against this legislation is the fact that it would put in place a trustworthy mechanism that can be reliably expected to yield a long term resolution to the Agent Orange matter. This would be done by requiring the VA to contract for the first time with an unbiased, non-governmental scientific entity such as the National Academy of Sciences for the purpose of reviewing existing and ongoing scientific studies and making recommendations each two years through the year 2000 on what diseases and conditions are reasonably associated with exposure to dioxin for compensation purposes.

Passage of this legislation last October in the House marks the first meaningful action by that body on this issue in the entire 12 year debate on Agent Orange. To allow an uncoupling of Agent Orange from the COLA next year, as you are now being asked to do by Agent Orange opponents, amounts to abandoning the wounded and dying on the battlefield. I doubt there are any disabled veterans who would not wait a few weeks for an increase in their COLA to help fellow veterans finally receive the assistance they deserve.

Your outspoken opposition to any such action is appreciated in advance.

Sincerely,



Mary R. Stout
President