

automatic reductions as a consequence of increases in other Federal retirement benefits such as social security. We are happy that the President, too, has asked for Senate concurrence in his newest message.

I also want to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to voice our special thanks and deep appreciation for the steadfast support this committee gave to H.R. 2151 which provides for an annual audit of our accounts by the U.S. Comptroller General. As Public Law 90-208, this statute will enable us to avoid duplication and waste of effort in connection with filing our financial reports at State and city levels. Indeed, it will effectively serve to eliminate a perplexing problem that has plagued the DAV for a long time.

In particular I want to thank the distinguished chairman of this committee for steering the bill so competently through the full House of Representatives. He has our profound gratitude.

It is further in order, Mr. Chairman, to express our confidence in the work of the Veterans Advisory Commission whose report is due at the White House very soon.

The DAV is privileged to be represented on that Commission by a gentleman well known to the members of this committee, Claude L. Callegary, of Baltimore, Md., a past national commander of the DAV. Mr. Callegary has had a long and distinguished record of service to the cause of America's veterans. We are proud, very proud, to have him as our representative on the Advisory Panel.

Our national director of legislation, Chet Huber, was given the opportunity last October 3, to appear before the Commission and to discuss, in a general wrap-up, the recommendations of other DAV officers in previous appearances before the Commission.

The fact that the vast majority of our recommendations are concerned with the disability and death compensation programs is a reflection of the major emphasis placed on these issues by the mandates of our national convention.

I think, in these matters, we can anticipate that the Veterans' Advisory Commission will have quite a bit to say when it finally reports. This conviction is further bolstered by the fact that the President's message last week on veterans' affairs did not come to grips with these questions. The administration has itself acknowledged that it is looking forward to the recommendations of the Commission which has a mandate of its own for a comprehensive study of such matters.

We applaud the decision to put democracy to work in this fashion. But since we have only this opportunity to outline our own views, we cannot wait to see whether and where our philosophy may parallel the Commission's ultimate recommendations. Thus we come, Mr. Chairman, to the heart of our testimony.

After a thorough study of the subject, we have concluded that the present rates of disability and death compensation are grossly inadequate to permit the veteran or his widow a position in our society which we feel they are entitled to enjoy.

Much has been said concerning the adverse effect of the continued increase in the cost of living upon those who are compelled by circumstance to subsist on fixed incomes. The 90th Congress has already enacted legislation to ease the economic burden of military