As an example of this dedication and responsibility is the enactment of Public Law 90-77, which, among its many beneficial provisions, conferred a war-veteran status on those of our Armed Forces who served since August 5, 1964, equal to that of veterans of prior wars.

Also, we include in this the House's passage of H.R. 12555, an act to restructure the death and disability pension, and dependent parents' dependency and indemnity compensation programs. For these, we thank you, the Congress, and the President of the United States.

In addition, I take this moment to express our appreciation and gratitude to the members of your staff for their cooperation and willingness to assist us in the presentation of our veterans' programs. They are an able, conscientious, and hardworking staff, and I hope you are justly proud of them.

At this point, Mr. Chairman, may I say that I look forward to tomorrow evening, when we shall have the pleasure of honoring the Members of Congress at our annual banquet, at the Sheraton Park Hotel. At that time, Members and Legionnaires from every State will meet and renew acquaintances in a social atmosphere. I sincerely hope that each of you will find it possible to come.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I will discuss only our major rehabilitation legislative objectives for this session of the 90th Congress. Submitted as an attachment to this statement is a complete listing of our resolutions on veterans' benefits legislation.

First, increase the compensation payable for total or 100-percent disability.

At present, the law authorizes payment of compensation of $300 a month to those veterans whose war service disabilities are evaluated at 100 percent. Disability compensation rates were last increased effective December 1, 1965.

According to the legislative history associated with the act which granted this increase—Public Law 89-311—the increased rates were responsive to the rise in the cost of living that had occurred since 1933, as measured by the Consumer's Price Index published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor.

The American Legion agrees that cost-of-living increases in compensation and other benefit programs are frequently necessary. The Consumer's Price Index, however, is definitely not a measure of "How much does it cost to live?" This depends on the age, size, type of family, and other factors.

An important factor that is not given consideration by applying the Consumer's Price Index formula is a family's standard of living.

Studies of the Bureau of Labor Statistics on changes in the consumption standard for the period of 1951-66 reveal that the rise in a moderate standard of living, after adjustment for price changes, averaged about 3.5 to 4 percent a year.

Other partinent studies by the Bureau of Labor Statistics developed a typical city worker family budget for a moderate standard of living This established that the annual cost of living for a family of four persons—husband 38, wife not employed outside the home, a boy of 13, and a girl of 8—averaged $9,181 in the autumn of 1966 in urban areas. About 80 percent of the total cost of the budget was allocated to family consumption items—food, housing, transportation, clothing, personal care, medical care, and other items used in family living. The