

Mr. DORN. Thank you, Mr. President, for a very excellent statement.
Mr. Pucinski.

Mr. PUCINSKI. Mr. Burghoff, I think you raised some extremely interesting points here. I could only repeat to you what I said earlier, it is important for organizations like yours to testify before this committee. You live with these problems. You see these problems day-in and day-out.

I think it is very important for us in Congress to know your thinking and your statement certainly raises many of the problems confronting the paralyzed veterans. I want to congratulate you for it.

Thank you very much.

Mr. DORN. Thank you.

Mr. Fino.

Mr. FINO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the president of the PVA for appearing before the committee. We certainly appreciate your statement. I was particularly interested in your statement on page 4 where you speak of the time between the discharge of a veteran from the hospital and eligibility for an income from the VA. I think, in line with this problem, the Veterans' Administration, which as I understand is pretty efficient, will work as fast as possible to make sure the veteran will be given his income as soon as possible.

The real problem lies with the military getting the record and forwarding it directly to the Veterans' Administration. I think it is a matter that should be brought to the attention of the Armed Services Committee to get them to push a little harder for these people over at the Pentagon and work a little faster.

Mr. DORN. Mr. Halpern.

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to express my enthusiastic commendation for your fine presentation and for the soundness and equity in your proposal. I think all of these fellows deserve this and I want to associate myself with your views and express my fullest assurance of support.

I was particularly pleased to note your recommendation to give cabinet rank to the Veterans Administration. This has long been an objective of mine, in fact, ever since I came to the Congress and ever since I became a member of this committee, and in fact, at a State legislature session I introduced a resolution in regard to Congress taking this action, so I am glad to see that the U.S. Veterans' Advisory Commission came out so strongly for this recommendation.

This agency touches directly on the lives of a vast majority of the American people and has reached a point now, where for the many reasons you have stated, it should be given a Cabinet rating. Particularly, I should say an agency so vital to American lives should be given and enjoy agency status.

This agency should be heard at the highest council of our Government at the Cabinet level and I am glad for this recommendation and extend my best to your fine organization and wish to commend you for the work you have done.

Mr. DORN. Thank you, Mr. Halpern, and thank you, Mr. President.

Now, if your group would remain, we have one more witness from the Veterans of World War I, and the Chair would appreciate this, because we are running a little behind here.