

In closing, I want to convey to you and the members of your fine committee the sincere thanks of AMVETS, its national officers and staff and membership for the tremendous job being done by all of you in promoting the welfare of veterans and their dependents.

We of Amvets pledge our cooperation and continued support and objective thinking in arriving at legitimate proposals designed to formulate a sound and fair veterans benefits program.

In closing I might add I am in hopes that the AMVETS organization will have the opportunity of being with you at a reception we are tendering to the Members of the 91st Congress this evening at 6:30 at the Statler Hilton Hotel.

May I express my gratitude and deep appreciation for the opportunity of appearing before you.

Mr. DORN, Commander, on behalf of the chairman and I am sure the members of the committee, I want to express to you our appreciation for a really outstanding statement to the committee. I want to express, also, Mr. Teague's regret at not being here this morning. He has another meeting of the Committee on Science and Astronautics, which committee is in the process of organizing, and that is always very important. I think Mr. Teague, because of his foresight, is perhaps more responsible than anyone for the progress made by this country in space. As some of you know, he is chairman of the Manned Space Flight Subcommittee, which has had a great deal to do with the development of our space program. So I am sure you will excuse him for not being here this morning.

I will start by asking some of our new members this morning if they have any questions. Mr. Montgomery of Mississippi is not a new Member to the Congress but is a new member to the committee. Mr. Montgomery, I would like to present you to the gathering here and to the commander for any questions or any comments you would like to make.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. I have two questions, but first I would like to compliment the commander on his fine and detailed report. I will keep this report as a personal reference for the future.

I have two questions. First, do you have any priorities, representing the Amvets, in some of these veteran benefits that might be enacted in the 91st Congress? You have mentioned several different benefits. Do you have any priorities?

Mr. FERRINO. The convention mandates have not given priorities to any specific pieces of legislation, but I would say one area where we feel there is almost an emergency status is in the field of the national cemetery system and we feel that the 91st Congress and this committee, with its leadership, should assert itself in this area as one of the prime pieces of legislation that should be enacted by the 91st Congress.

Another area that I feel should be given a great deal of emphasis is the enactment of legislation to implement the mandate of our delegates and our membership in the field of utilization of the hospital facilities of the VA and extending benefits to the widows and dependents of deceased veterans and in the area of the 100-percent disabled veterans and their wives and children. This area we also feel very, very strongly about and certainly would hope that this session of Congress would further the tremendous work that it did in the