

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want to express my sincere thanks and grateful appreciation for this opportunity to come before you and present the 1969 legislative program of the Disabled American Veterans.

I am particularly pleased to share this very special event with a deeply dedicated group of DAV department and national officers who have journeyed here from all sections of the Nation to take part in our annual midwinter conference.

In their behalf, I offer hearty congratulations to the members of this committee who have previously served and who have returned to serve again on this distinguished panel. I also take this moment to extend a very warm welcome to the new members of the committee and to wish them the fullest measure of success in their assignment.

For the benefit of the new members, I think it appropriate to restate the primary objectives and guiding principles of our organization.

The DAV is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose fundamental objectives is to work for enactment of legislation to improve the physical, social and economic well-being of those who have suffered wounds, injuries, and disabling sickness during national emergencies. In this regard, our attention is directly focused upon legislation which seeks to enhance opportunities for employment and proper job placement so that the remaining ability of the disabled veteran is used in the most productive way; to provide training and, or education for the wartime disabled to restore employability and employment; to provide hospital and medical care to restore disabled veterans to a state of good health; and to provide adequate compensation for the loss of earning power resulting from service connected disabilities. The matter of adequate compensation applies, of course, to the widows, children, and dependent parents of those who die of service connected causes.

To carry out our objectives, we depend to a very large degree upon the invaluable help and cooperation of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and its excellent staff.

As you know, the DAV legislative programs spring from proposals expressed in resolutions adopted by our national conventions. Last August, at Philadelphia, Pa., the national convention adopted 81 resolutions which require legislative action.

A number of the resolutions deal with loyalty to the United States, its traditions, interests, and ideals. They reflect a continuing call for vigilance and a return to the principles of patriotism that have shaped this Nation and made it endure.

In the wake of present dissent over U.S. involvement in Vietnam—ranging from the arrogant cries of campus critics, to the wanton destruction of the flag—the DAV was delighted and encouraged by the resolute statements made by the chairman of this committee in a keynote speech to the delegates at our Philadelphia National Convention. It conveyed a very real and a very profound concern over the breakdown in law and order, the resort to violence by too many people for too many reasons, and the assault on the decent and civilized values by which most Americans have always lived.

Patriotism, as we understand it, connotes love of country—the beauty of the land, the nobility of the Nation's traditions and values.