

under funded in recent years as appropriators have tried to balance our federal budget. Our proposal breathes new life into these programs by ensuring that a constant source of funds will be available to our towns and states to meet their conservation and recreation needs.

Finally, to assist states in meeting the increased demand for funding programs used for non-game species of wildlife, our bill would reinvest ten percent of the revenues gained from OCS development into a new wildlife and education program. The funds would be distributed through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Fund, also known as Pittman-Robertson, which has been a model framework for wildlife conservation and recreation projects since its inception in 1939. However, unlike similar proposals that have been suggested to meet non-game wildlife needs, our proposal does not include a new excise tax on sporting goods to fund the program.

Mr. Speaker, the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1998" creates a responsible framework for meeting current and future conservation needs that will yield environmental, recreational and economic benefits for all Americans. I realize that we have very little time remaining in this Congress, but I urge all of my colleagues to take a close look at this proposal and work with the cosponsors of this bill to improve upon it so that we can reintroduce, consider, and enact legislation during the 106th Congress.

CONGRESS UPHOLDING  
COMMITMENT TO VETERANS

**HON. DAVID DREIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 7, 1998*

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is no better advocate for our nation's veterans than Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale. Throughout his military career and in his private life, Admiral Stockdale has tirelessly worked on behalf of those who served our country in the Armed Forces. While a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, Stockdale injured himself so that his fellow prisoners could escape torture and punishment. For his service to our country, Admiral Stockdale has been awarded two Purple Hearts, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Distinguished Service Medals, four Silver Stars and the Congressional Medal of Honor. In fact, he is the only three or four star officer in the history of the U.S. Navy to wear both aviator wings and the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In a recent speech on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, which I submit for the record, Admiral Stockdale urged Congress to uphold the nation's commitment to our veterans. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have indeed heeded that advice. Last month, the House approved the Defense Authorization conference report which allows military retirees to join the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan. Furthermore, yesterday the House approved the fiscal year 1999 VA/HUD Appropriations conference report, which provides \$19 billion for veterans programs, \$439 million more than was requested by President Clinton. In short, I believe that Congress is following Admiral Stockdale's leadership by approving legislation

that honors those who valiantly served our country.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY VICE ADMIRAL JAMES  
B. STOCKDALE

THE CAPITOL STEPS, WASHINGTON, DC,  
SEPTEMBER 22, 1998

Thank you very much for that warm introduction and for the opportunity to join you here today.

Over the years, I have come to Washington many times for many reasons—but on this visit, we come together to focus the nation's attention on our responsibilities to the men and women who have nobly worn the uniform of their Country—the valiant Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Air Force personnel who have answered their Country's call to service.

In the history of this wonderful republic, we have celebrated those who have been willing to put their lives on the line—to pay the ultimate sacrifice to protect the ideals that made America great. To protect the basic freedoms that characterize the majesty of the American experiment in defining the relationship between citizens and their government.

As a nation, as a people, we have never hesitated to ask our fellow citizens to don the uniform of their country to fight for—to protect against forces detrimental to the interests of the United States. We have asked our sons and daughters to endure the horrors of war and to serve as agents of peace. We have, for 200 years, always asked, and they have always answered. Any alternative would be unthinkable. But an integral part of this bargain has been a fundamental understanding—a MORAL CONTRACT—that we will not turn away, we will not abrogate our obligations to them after they have done their part for us. For our ideals, and for the preservation of our great nation.

Now, we stand here together with the recognition that this sacred compact has been shattered. With a heavy heart, I have come to this place, to our nation's Capitol, to ask the Congress of the United States to honor America's traditional commitment—a hitherto unquestioned commitment—to its military veterans.

For generations Presidents have approved the promise of free, lifetime medical care for military veterans. Legislative and administrative authority made these promises law. As far back as 1799, the U.S. Government offered free medical and hospital care to Seamen and Marines. In 1995 this all changed.

Now the government says that Veterans over the age of 65—we're talking about World War II and Korean Vets—are no longer eligible for treatment at military hospitals. Rather than fulfilling its historical contract with its fighting men and women, the Government now demands that these retirees must personally supplement Medicare benefits to obtain basic health care.

I am here today to carry this message for everyone who has worn the great uniform of the United States. To urge the Government to do the right thing for all of its retired military service personnel. Many of them are old. Many are sick, and many simply cannot afford to pay the costs of supplemental health care on military retirement pay.

A great American once said, "Old soldiers never die—they merely fade away." I am confident that General Douglas MacArthur would agree with me that they should surely be allowed to "fade away with dignity!"

Today, there are a million and a half retired military men and women, each with a dependent, 3 million all together, who simply cannot afford supplemental health insurance and are not receiving the benefit of the bargain—the bargain the United States Gov-

ernment made with them when they signed up to serve their Country. There are all too many heartbreaking examples of retired GI's who have had to sell their homes, liquidate their savings, or suffer the indignities of inadequate medical care because of the Government's current position. This is shameful. This is un-American. And this is totally unacceptable. I come to Washington to join you in asking our Congressional leaders—Senators Lott and Daschle, and Speaker Gingrich and Minority Leader Gephardt to right this wrong.

To enact legislation to provide lifetime retirement medical care for those Americans—and their dependents—who were willing to put their lives on the line for their Country. Over the last 200 years, America has asked and received so very much from its fighting men and women—now they are asking us for so little in return. For the opportunity to see a doctor. For medical treatment. For medicine.

As the richest, most powerful nation on Earth, I believe the United States of America can and should do the right thing for the very people who have suffered enormous sacrifice and burden to ensure the existence of a society we so enjoy—and a Country we so love.

I hope together, we can right this terrible wrong!

God Bless the United States of America, and God bless and protect the men and women of the United States military services. Thank you very much.

HONORING RICHARD EDLER

**HON. JERRY WELLER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 7, 1998*

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work and dedication of Mr. Richard Edler, who retired after 35 years and 6 months of service from the U.S. Treasury Department—Internal Revenue Service Collection Division on August 28, 1998.

Mr. E., as he is lovingly called by his counterparts at the I.R.S., has made large contributions to the Internal Revenue Service. Over the 35 years, Richard has been a Revenue Officer, a Compliance Officer, and has held various volunteer assignments including being the employee coordinator for the flu shots at the Olympia field office.

Mr. E. has also done a lot to help out his coworkers during his time at the Internal Revenue Service. Richard was the only person who arrived at the office prior to 6 a.m. every morning. He was always there to make sure to inform the employees if the parking lot conditions was clear of snow or flooding during inclement weather.

Richard Edler's commitment and impact on the Internal Revenue Service, and his service to his coworkers is not only deserving of congressional recognition, but should serve as a model for other government employees to follow.

I urge this body to identify and recognize others in their congressional districts whose actions have so greatly benefited and enlightened America's communities.