

The next phrase is "In order to form a more perfect Union." The Founders simply believed that the new government would be stronger than the one under the Articles of Confederation. You see, the loose confederation of States had led to bickering and ineffective government. But this new arrangement of States has allowed the States to retain their power, but also work together for the common good.

Thomas Jefferson wrote therefore, The union is the last anchor of our hope.

The third phrase is "to establish Justice."

□ 1915

This refers to a problem that had arisen in the State court systems. And so by creating a Supreme Court of the land, the Framers hoped to prevent egregious examples of trampled rights. But the Framers had a higher purpose in mind, too. In Federalist No. 51, James Madison wrote: "Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit."

The next section is to provide for the common defense. This phrase is perhaps the most evident today. See, the War for Independence had been fought for that very reason; and in the years following the war, our fledgling Nation had been unable to defend itself against the Barbary pirates and also from Spain and England threats. So the States realized they needed to unite to preserve the Union.

The next one is very important for today. The phrase "to promote the general welfare," this has been commonly interpreted to mean that the Federal Government can do almost anything as long as it accomplishes something beneficial. But you see, this definition ignores the Founders' real intent. See, they deliberately used qualifying words such as "general" because they meant to limit the powers rather than expand it. Think about it. Would it be proper and fair for the Federal Government to recognize certain groups over other ones, certain States over others? If the Founding Fathers didn't intend to create these special rights or special privileges or socioeconomic programs, there would not have been any reason to list the specific powers that are listed in the Constitution.

James Madison even stated that the "general welfare" clause was not intended to give Congress an open hand "to exercise every power which may be alleged to be necessary for the common defense or general welfare."

The final section reads "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." These words come from the previous phrase, for without law, it is impossible to achieve liberty for future generations.

I will close by saying we look forward each week to come to the floor on Tuesdays as we walk through the Constitution week after week to better un-

derstand this important document for this House and for this country.

RURAL VETERANS ACCESS TO CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, as many in this House of Representatives know, I represent one of the largest congressional districts in this country of over 53,000 square miles. The district is about the size of the State of Illinois. It is bigger than 25 of 26 States east of the Mississippi River. It has more hospitals than any other congressional district, but it has no Veterans Administration Hospital.

Some veterans in my rural district have experienced great difficulty in traveling to distant VA health facilities to access care. Though we have been successful in opening several VA outpatient clinics in the First Congressional District, access to care remains a real challenge for veterans living in rural Kansas.

I would like to share a couple of stories from Kansans who have written me recently. I received the following letter from the wife of a World War II veteran: "My husband and I have been residents of a long-term care facility for 2 years, and he is unable to travel 65 miles to take a physical at the Hays Kansas VA clinic, as is required by the VA to receive prescription benefits. They have stopped filling his prescription medicine. Veterans like Ralph gave several years of their lives for our country, and I feel it is a very ungrateful way to treat them."

The second case involves an elderly veteran from Hoxie, Kansas, who is in need of a pair of glasses. This veteran was told he must travel over 4 hours to the Wichita VA Hospital to get a new pair of glasses, a distance of about 260 miles, and it doesn't make sense to him because his community's optometrist is just across the street.

No, it doesn't make sense to any of us. Lack of access to VA care is a problem felt around the country by veterans living in rural America. Veterans who live in rural America are one in five of the veterans enrolled in the health care system. Rural veterans face unique challenges like long drives to VA facilities, bad weather, and lack of specialists. Limited access to VA care too often means rural veterans simply forgo the care and treatment they need. Studies have found that rural veterans are in poorer health than their urban counterparts. A policy change is needed. It isn't right to penalize some veterans because of where they live. It is time to provide these veterans the health care benefits they have earned and that have been promised to them.

I have introduced the Rural Veterans Access to Care Act with the goal of ending these disparities in access. This

legislation requires the VA to contract with qualified outside health providers to give our most underserved veterans more options to receive care. Rather than traveling long distances to reach VA facilities or deciding not to make the trip at all, these veterans would be given the choice to receive care closer to home at their local hospital or their community clinic or their local physician's office. Additionally, the VA would be required to fill prescriptions written by outside doctors to eligible veterans.

To meet the needs of highly rural veterans, the VA would contract and partner with community physicians as well as local hospitals, community health centers, and rural health clinics. These providers already supply high-quality care to America's rural population, and yet their services are denied to America's veterans.

Since our Nation's founding, rural communities have always responded to the Nation's call. Today, 44 percent of our country's military recruits come from rural America. When these rural soldiers return home from war, our Nation must be prepared to care for them. Let's take advantage of the successes of existing rural health infrastructure in order to meet the unmet needs of America's rural veterans.

For our elderly World War II veterans, our young soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and those who served in all of the conflicts in between, this is a commonsense and life-saving approach that our Nation owes its rural veterans.

AMERICA CANNOT REPEAT MISTAKE OF 1938

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, in the year 1938 domestic needs were great in this country. The New Deal programs that FDR had actually failed, and the Depression had deepened during his second term to the point that the P-51 fighter plane was considered so insignificant and so costly it was not funded that year.

When World War II started, the bombing runs that we took as a country produced 20 percent casualties for us to the point that we suspended bombing runs until we could build enough P-51 fighters to accompany them. It was not until the winter of 1943 that we were able to have superiority over the sky in Europe.

The technology of today has made this world so much smaller and so much faster that we cannot afford to make the same mistake this country did in 1938. We cannot predict the type of future combat we will be called upon to participate in. We must be prepared for that future.

Decisions we make today, because basically it takes 8 years from design to construction of a plane, decisions we