

turn mentor those who are younger still.

Well, we are taking the middle out of that as a result of this A-76 process. The employees who decide to stay on island and who leave the civil service are permitted, as I said earlier, with a right to first refusal for private sector jobs. But we have seen this is not very meaningful when the positions being offered are far below what they were previously earning.

The local Navy command on Guam is not to blame for the inherent weaknesses of the A-76 process. In fact, I would have to say they have done a very decent job in advertising their civil service employees with regard to benefits, Separation Incentive Pay, VERA, and Priority Placement Programs. However, the methods of employment and application of the A-76 rules and procedures were applied haphazardly by Navy's Pacific Division in Hawaii, with little regard for the human toll. Their desire to save money is so egregious, apparently, among some people, that they misinterpreted what functions should be exempt.

I am just going to give one example here before I make my conclusion. One of the things when you conduct a study like this is that you are supposed to make an assessment of what kind of activity constitutes "inherently governmental." What does it mean to say that we are able to contract out everything except these positions, because they are inherently governmental?

Now, when you ask that question in terms of the Department of Defense, what is "inherently governmental?" Well, one would assume that those things which are inherently governmental are those items, those activities, which directly contribute to the war-fighting capability and readiness of our Armed Services.

In Guam's case, in this A-76 process which I have just outlined, PACDIV's assessors nominated Guam's ordnance shop for the cutting board. Now, Guam has a huge facility currently called Naval Magazine which supplies ordnance for the fleet, which is the largest magazine, largest ordnance storage facility, of the Navy in the entire Pacific.

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But the Navy, some of these guys who are driven by this desire to save money, decided that moving around ordnance was somehow not connected to war-fighting capability or the preparation for war-fighting. Sometimes in the Committee on National Security we talk about the state of readiness; and this is an area, ordnance, where I think that if we do not have trained civil service employees with proven records, patriotic records, not dependent upon contractors who may or may not find the workers, who then have to deal with, well, what if we have a big surge of activity, we are going to have to charge even more.

So we have all of these factors, and the Navy decided that the RFP for ord-

nance needed to be let out. But it is even more incompetent than this particular issue because now the Navy has admitted that they inaccurately calculated the work data for the ordnance activity which they have contracted out; and now, today, Navy and Raytheon are renegotiating to increase the scope of the work and, guess what, move up the cost.

So there we have it, Mr. Speaker. What we have here is an example of how not to do an A-76 study, an example of how an A-76 commercial study cannot only negatively impact a community in terms of its economic base, but also deal with an almost unconcern with the human toll, the individual experience of the civil service worker, and in the process, not really understand what is inherently governmental.

We had a hearing, a joint hearing between the Subcommittee on Civil Service and the Subcommittee on Readiness over in the Committee on Armed Services last week. When I asked the question of DOD officials, what does the term "inherently governmental" mean for defense operations, and they said, well, every service kind of defines it its own way. Well, if you have the motivation to cut costs as the primary motivator in making the decision on A-76, "inherently governmental" is going to be defined in a way that is going to hurt readiness and is going to be damaging to the security and defense of this country.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, in light of these fallacies and problems which have occurred on Guam and which occur in other places as well with the Navy's A-76, I am calling for two things: one, I am calling for the Navy to explore halting the implementation of this contract, exploring every possible avenue to stop and take a breather on this contract until many of these grievances and miscalculations can be reassessed. Secondly, I am calling upon the U.S. General Accounting Office to conduct an audit into the way the Navy organized, planned, and conducted this outsourcing study on Guam with seemingly little regard to the impact on the small isolated community that, relative to its population, has a dramatically significant role in the readiness of the U.S. military in the western Pacific.

Finally, our beleaguered civil servants are beginning to emerge as a kind of endangered species. As times and practices change, they too will have to adapt in order to remain relevant in the national defense arena. In spite of this, they should not have to endure negative fallout as a result of DOD's panacea called outsourcing, notwithstanding their own admitted skepticism.

The DOD must do better in bridging the benefits gap to alleviate displaced employees, especially when, inevitably, many will lose their livelihoods. In the end, all DOD may be left with is reduced readiness, a degraded military capability, and an exiled civil service

workforce that collectively contributes to the weakening of America's national security policy.

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#### U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD HONOR COMMITMENT TO MILITARY RETIREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, my purpose in rising this afternoon is threefold. I would like to share with my colleagues a story that is virtually unparalleled in illustrating the difficulty many military retirees face in the effort to have their government fulfill its promise of lifelong health care.

Second, I want to salute the extraordinary efforts of a retired service member in my district, Mr. Len Gagne of Ashland, Oregon, whose selfless devotion to his fellow service members has endured long after the Government's commitment to them waned.

Finally, I want to highlight the importance, indeed the absolute necessity, of honoring our Nation's commitment to provide lifelong health care coverage to our military retirees.

Here on this picture next to me are some of the 2,500 military retirees in Oregon's Rogue Valley, all of whom entered the armed services with the explicit promise of lifelong medical care following their retirement. As most of my colleagues know, due to downsizing and the subsequent lack of space available at many military medical facilities, that promise has not been kept.

Thirteen years ago, Len Gagne and a number of retirees pictured here banded together to form a courier service to help military retirees from the region obtain prescription drugs more easily. Living in rural Oregon where the majority of military retirees live hundreds of miles from the nearest military facility makes getting prescriptions filled difficult.

The group began a service to get prescription drug orders filled at the Army Medical Center at Fort Lewis, Washington. Now, the prescription orders for these men and women were sent to Eugene, Oregon, and then to Fort Lewis where they were later picked up by volunteers and driven back to Oregon. All of the costs associated with this distribution effort were borne by the private individuals and not by the Government. So unorthodox was this service that the prescriptions were stored and distributed out of a member's home for several years before the use of facilities at the Naval Reserve Center in Central Point, Oregon were made available.

About 8 years ago, the makeshift prescription delivery service shifted facilities when Beale Air Force Base, located 13 miles east of Marysville, California, became Oregon's primary care location. Twice a month, courier trips were

made to Beale, eventually filling as many as 2,200 prescriptions per month. In total, the volunteer couriers, who used their own vehicles and never accepted a dime of government reimbursement, covered more than 25,000 miles a year. The selflessness of these men and women allowed many older retirees who could not otherwise have made the trip the opportunity to get the prescription drugs they needed.

Mr. Speaker, I have been disappointed to learn that this practice has become widespread among military retirees, a practice that they should not have to go through to get the prescriptions this government guaranteed them.

Mr. Gagne's operation continued until last year when authorities at Beale shut down the courier service, as many military facilities across the United States have been forced to do so in recent years. Prescriptions were no longer filled for those who did not appear at Beale in person. But because many of these men and women are either too elderly or too ill to make the taxing journey to Beale or Fort Lewis, this cut-off essentially closed the door on life-saving prescription drugs for these retirees, some of whom have dedicated over 30 years of service to this great country of ours.

Around the time Mr. Gagne learned of the cut-off at Beale, he devised a plan to continue providing the medicines that he and his fellow service members needed, a strategy that was as innovative as it was selfless. Len learned of a policy that allowed military retirees whose prescriptions are filled at a base being closed under the Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC, plan to be eligible for permanent mail delivery of prescription medicines. He also learned that McClellan Air Force Base, located nine miles east of Sacramento, would be closing in July of 2000. Though the Rogue Valley retirees lived literally hundreds of miles away from McClellan, Len reasoned that if they could demonstrate their dependence on the pharmacy service at that base, according to the policy, their supply of prescriptions would be secure.

So, Mr. Gagne arranged bus trips to transport groups of retirees to the closing base where they signed statements of dependency on its pharmacy. Again, the people pictured in this photograph on display in the House Chamber are a part of that group that went on the bus trip. Now, we have to understand the distance from Medford, Oregon, to Sacramento is 309 miles, roughly the distance between Washington, D.C. and New Haven, Connecticut, or Greensboro, North Carolina, if one wanted to go south.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, having to go from Washington, D.C. to Connecticut or North Carolina to get your prescriptions filled. Imagine, a nearly 620 mile round trip every time you wanted to go to the drugstore. Well, they chartered buses at \$1,150 per trip, all paid for by themselves; and approximately 40 peo-

ple at a time made the 16-hour round trip to McClellan, where they got a 3-month supply of medicines and thereby qualified for the BRAC pharmacy benefit.

The retirees and dependents pictured here, many of whom are decorated combat veterans of World War II, are seen standing outside the McClellan clinic during one such trip. I am told that Mr. Gagne's ingenuity in organizing these trips is probably without precedent. No other retirees have ever traveled en masse to a closing base simply to qualify for the BRAC benefit. It goes without saying that it is appalling that these retirees are forced to find loopholes in the system simply to gain what they were promised by this government years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the basic contract that binds a professional military to the government it serves is an uncomplicated one. It is an understanding which assumes that in exchange for a life spent in service to the Nation, the government has certain fundamental obligations to its retirees. In the United States, these obligations have traditionally meant a reasonable retirement wage and promise of lifetime access to health care. In return, the American people are ensured of their defense by a group whose dedication to duty is the very definition of professionalism throughout the world, a group whose members have laid down their lives by the hundreds of thousands in defense of the ideals and freedoms we so often invoke in this House.

The hallowed bonds between the Government and the military are straining in ways that are becoming ominously apparent with each passing year. This strain is manifest in the thousands of loyal soldiers on food stamps whose condition is often alluded to in this very Chamber, but remains uncorrected. It is obvious in the declining enlistment and re-enlistment rates that have caused a near panic among senior military officials; and I submit to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that a government unconcerned about busloads of aged retirees traveling hundreds of miles at their own expense for basic medicines is not a government committed to strengthening those bonds. For how can we ask our service members to continue to perform their vital duties while the Government fails to uphold its fundamental responsibility to care for those who have served in the past.

It is examples such as the one I have related that compelled me to cosponsor the Keep Our Promise to Americans Military Retirees Act. I urge my colleagues who have not yet done so to join us in advancing this essential piece of legislation. The men and women of the United States military who provide the very blanket of security under which we spend our lives deserve no less. It is nothing short of outrageous that military retirees across this Nation are forced to undergo such adversity simply to get what was

promised to them in the first place. I urge my colleagues to restore the military's faith in the government it serves and renew our commitment to our retired service members.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my personal gratitude to Len Gagne and those who assist him and the thousands of men and women like him whose commitment to their comrades is matched only by their devotion to the Nation they so tirelessly serve.

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#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. GIBBONS) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. NEY, for 5 minutes, March 14.

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#### SENATE BILL AND CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REFERRED

A bill and concurrent resolution of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 1653. An act to reauthorize and amend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act; to the Committee on Resources.

S. Con. Res. 95. Concurrent resolution commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the Halabja massacre; to the Committee on International Relations.

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#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 376. An act to amend the Communications Satellite Act of 1962 to promote competition and privatization in satellite communications, and for other purposes.

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#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 14, 2000, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debates.

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#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6544. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the