

The original documents are located in Box 38, “9/30/76 - Remarks Upon the Signing of H.R. 14298 and 14299: Veterans and Survivors Pension Adjustment Act of 1976, and Veterans Disability Compensation and Survivor Benefits Act of 1976” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN. . .

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON SIGNING H.R. 14298
AND 14299, PENSION AND COMPENSATION BENEFIT
INCREASES FOR VETERANS, SEPTEMBER 30, 1976

THIS AFTERNOON, I AM VERY PLEASED TO SIGN INTO LAW
TWO BILLS WHICH WILL PROTECT PENSIONS AND INCREASE DISABILITY
PAYMENTS FOR SOME FIVE MILLION VETERANS AND THEIR SURVIVORS.
THEY WILL ENSURE THAT THE BENEFITS WHICH THESE VETERANS HAVE
EARNED, FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THEIR FAMILIES, WILL KEEP
PACE WITH THE COST OF LIVING.

THESE BILLS REPRESENT ANOTHER STEP IN OUR CONTINUING
EFFORT TO FULFILL THE WORDS SPOKEN MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO --
'TO CARE FOR HIM WHO SHALL HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE, AND FOR
HIS WIDOW, AND HIS ORPHAN.'

IN DECEMBER, 1975, I SIGNED A BILL PROVIDING A
TEMPORARY COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE IN VETERANS PENSIONS
FOR THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR. ONE OF THE
BILLS I AM SIGNING TODAY WILL MAKE THAT INCREASE PERMANENT.
IT WILL PROTECT MORE THAN TWO AND ONE-QUARTER MILLION
VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM HAVING THEIR PENSION
PAYMENTS REDUCED NEXT WEEK. IN ADDITION, IT WILL PROVIDE
A 7 PERCENT COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE IN PENSION BENEFITS
FROM THE FIRST OF NEXT YEAR.

THE SECOND BILL I AM SIGNING WILL RAISE BY 8 PERCENT
DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR MORE THAN 2 MILLION SERVICE-DISABLED
VETERANS. IT WILL ALSO INCREASE SOME OTHER SPECIAL
BENEFIT PAYMENTS.

AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, AND AS A CITIZEN, I SALUTE
OUR VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS -- WHICH PLAYED SUCH AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN DEVELOPING THIS LEGISLATION. THEY ARE
DOING A FIRST-RATE JOB OF REPRESENTING THE LEGITIMATE
INTERESTS OF VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

OUR VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO PLAYING ITS PART
IN MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR VETERANS. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP
OF DICK ROUDEBUSH, IT HAS MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS.

WE ARE GOING TO MAKE SURE THAT PROGRESS CONTINUES.
FOR MEDICAL NEEDS IN PARTICULAR, MY BUDGETS FOR FISCAL
YEARS 1976 AND 1977 HAVE PROVIDED MORE FUNDING, MORE
PERSONNEL AND BETTER FACILITIES TO GIVE ELIGIBLE VETERANS
THE HIGHEST-QUALITY, FASTEST SERVICE POSSIBLE. I HAVE
REQUESTED FUNDS TO CONSTRUCT TWO NEW VA HOSPITALS -- AND
TO DESIGN SIX MORE. *which will be built as*

MY ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO DOING RIGHT BY
AMERICA'S VETERANS. THEY SERVED THEIR COUNTRY WELL
IN WAR -- IT IS ONLY RIGHT WE SERVE THEM WELL IN PEACE.

MY ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO COMMITTED TO CONTINUING THE
FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION. THE THREAT IT POSES TO AMERICANS
LIVING ON FIXED PENSIONS AND BENEFITS -- SUCH AS VETERANS
AND THE ELDERLY -- CANNOT BE TOLERATED.

WHILE ADJUSTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND VETERAN BENEFITS
FOR THE COST-OF-LIVING, WE WILL CONTINUE DOING EVERYTHING
WE CAN TO REMOVE THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF INFLATION.

IN THE LONG RUN -- THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE THE
ECONOMIC SECURITY OF ALL AMERICANS.

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