

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS CONVENTION
AMERICAN LEGION HALL
FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1985

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS CONVENTION

AMERICAN LEGION HALL

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1985

RECENTLY, I DEDICATED A NEW MEMORIAL IN NEW JERSEY.

THE MEMORIAL WAS CALLED "LIBERATION" --- AND MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, IT IS A MEMORIAL TO OUR VETERANS. A MEMORIAL TO THEIR SACRIFICES, THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR COMPASSION.

IT IS A MOVING TRIBUTE -- A SCULPTURE OF A WORLD WAR II SOLDIER CARRYING A VICTIM TO SAFETY.

THE SOLDIER'S HEAD IS HUNG -- AS IF IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SOMBER TASK. BUT HIS ARMS ARE STRONG. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, HIS HEART IS FULL OF COMPASSION FOR HIS FELLOW MAN.

THAT STATUE REPRESENTS, BEAUTIFULLY IN MY VIEW, WHAT VETERANS HAVE BEEN TO AMERICA AND THE WORLD: DEFENDERS OF LIBERTY, GUARDIANS OF FREEDOM, LIBERATORS OF THE OPPRESSED.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO HONOR OUR VETERANS. AND AS LONG AS I AM GOVERNOR, WE SHALL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

BUT, TO BE HONEST, WE OWE OUR VETERANS MORE THAN THAT. MORE THAN HONORS AND MEMORIALS. WE OWE THEM OUR COMMITMENT AND HELP.

THAT'S WHAT I AS GOVERNOR AM COMMITTED TO PROVIDING. AND THAT'S WHY I AM HAPPY TO SPEAK TO YOU, OUR DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, TODAY.

THERE ARE VETERANS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FROM A NUMBER OF STATE, LOCAL, AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS. I'VE TRIED TO INCREASE THE KINDS OF BENEFITS AVAILABLE.

BUT, TOO OFTEN, IT'S DIFFICULT OR AT LEAST CONFUSING TO GET INFORMATION ON ALL THE VARIOUS PROGRAMS.

WE WANT TO CHANGE THAT. FOR EXAMPLE, I HAVE RECENTLY ATTENDED A VETERANS SUPERMARKET TO PROVIDE A CLEARING HOUSE OF INFORMATION ON ALL KINDS OF VETERANS BENEFITS IN ONE CENTRAL LOCATION.

AND WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A VETERANS HOTLINE SO THAT YOU CAN GET INFORMATION BY SIMPLY PICKING UP YOUR TELEPHONE. BY THE WAY, THE HOTLINE NUMBER IS 1-800-624-0508.

THERE ARE OVER 925,000 VETERANS IN NEW JERSEY -- THAT MAKES US NINTH IN THE NATION IN VETERANS POPULATION.

AND WE'RE WORKING TO SERVE THOSE VETERANS:

WE HAVE AN ENTIRE DIVISION -- THE DIVISION OF VETERANS PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES -- DEDICATED TO SERVING VETERANS.

WE'VE OPENED FOUR VETERANS MULTI-SERVICE CENTERS IN JERSEY CITY, NEW BRUNSWICK, BRICK TOWNSHIP, AND DEPTFORD TO BETTER SERVE VETERANS.

AND LAST YEAR, I SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH THE VIETNAM VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH FOUR VIETNAM VETERANS CENTERS TO BE CO-LOCATED IN THOSE SAME AREAS.

WE'VE CREATED A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR COMBAT VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR -- AND WE'VE STARTED A RESEARCH PROGRAM ON AGENT ORANGE THAT IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER STATE'S IN THE COUNTRY. IT'S A NATIONAL MODEL.

I BROKE GROUND ON A NEW CEMETERY FOR NEW JERSEY VETERANS IN BURLINGTON COUNTY.

AND WE'RE BUILDING A NEW VETERANS MEMORIAL HOME IN BERGEN COUNTY.

MONEY FROM THE HUMAN SERVICES BOND ISSUE THAT WE PASSED LAST YEAR IS GOING TOWARD VETERANS FACILITIES -- LIKE THE HOMES FOR DISABLED SOLDIERS IN VINELAND AND MENLO PARK.

WE ARE DOING ALL THIS FOR A REASON.

WE OWE OUR VETERANS A DEBT..

AND TO YOU -- OUR DISABLED VETERANS -- WE OWE A DOUBLE DEBT. YOU HAVE MADE A GREAT SACRIFICE FOR OUR COUNTRY. OUR COUNTRY SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT YOUR SACRIFICE DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED. THAT YOUR COURAGE IS HONORED. THAT YOU -- OUR VETERANS -- ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

NEW JERSEY IS COMMITTED TO HELPING ITS VETERANS.

BECAUSE A VETERAN IS SPECIAL.

ALL THE PROGRAMS I HAVE OUTLINED ARE ONE PART OF THAT COMMITMENT. AND YOU CAN BE SURE THAT AS LONG AS I AM GOVERNOR THAT COMMITMENT WILL REMAIN, AND THAT COMMITMENT WILL BE STRONG.

NATHAN RAPAPORT'S SCULPTURE WAS MADE BECAUSE AMERICAN VETERANS HAVE LIT THE LAMP OF LIBERTY AROUND THE WORLD. THE CHALLENGE NOW FOR GOVERNMENT IS TO LIGHT THE LAMP OF OPPORTUNITY FOR VETERANS ALL OVER NEW JERSEY.

THANK YOU.