

TAPE FOR WEEK OF APRIL 26

THIS IS CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL.

THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION TODAY HAS THE THIRD LARGEST BUDGET IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMINISTERING TO POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES APPROACHING 45 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL U.S. POPULATION. WITH THIS IN MIND, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE PRESIDENT BE PROVIDED FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON THE CONCERNS OF OUR NATION'S VETERANS--AND IT IS FOR THIS REASON I HAVE JOINED A MOVEMENT TO ESTABLISH A CABINET-LEVEL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

SUCH ACTION WOULD CONSOLIDATE ALL VETERANS RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND SET CLEARER POLICY GOALS TO ASSIST THE NEARLY 30 MILLION AMERICAN VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

FURTHERMORE, THE COST TO MAKE THIS CHANGE WOULD BE ALMOST NOTHING--SINCE ONLY THE STATUS OF THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE ELEVATED TO AN EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT RATHER THAN AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY.

THIS IDEA IS SUPPORTED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION AND OTHER VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS, AND IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE IDEA CAN BECOME A REALITY--FOR OUR NATION'S VETERANS.

THIS IS CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL.