

quately protect his rights or interests. Current legal requirements concerning case plans, periodic review, and other safeguards are widely ignored, with the result that tens of thousands of children remain in long term, indeterminate care far longer than actually is necessary, often with sad results for themselves and their families.

In 1975, Mr. BARNES and then Senator MONDALIS conducted a day of joint hearings which pointed out the shortcomings of the Federal role in foster care. Last September, Mr. BARNES and I held another day of hearings during which alternatives to the present foster care crisis were thoroughly discussed and shown, where operating in select areas of the country, to be highly successful and cost-effective. This legislation, which I am introducing today, will establish those types of accountability processes as standard features of Federal law.

This legislation has been developed from the record of those hearings by the Select Education Subcommittee, and with the assistance of many concerned and interested parties from the child welfare and child advocacy communities. I believe that this legislation will receive unusually strong support from a wide spectrum of concerned individuals and organizations, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

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

(Mr. PEPPER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VIETNAM VETERANS

Mr. HANLEY asked and was given permission to extend his remarks at this point in the Record and to include extraneous matter.

Mr. HANLEY. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is slowly, but surely, recovering from the wounds of the Vietnam war. Through the amnesty programs of the Ford and Carter administrations, many of those young people who left their homes to seek refuge in other countries, rather than fight in a war which they believed to be wrong, have made their way back to the families and country which they love. Through the special discharge review program, those individuals who received less than honorable discharges, often because of their open opposition to the Vietnam war, will be eligible to have their military discharges upgraded. There are, however, a certain group of Vietnam veterans who are still suffering from the effects of their service in Vietnam and whose problem, to date, has been largely ignored.

These are individuals who, for the most part, served honorably in Vietnam. Some of whom were wounded during their military service, and who were discharged under honorable conditions. Yet, these veterans, discharge cards in hand, have been repeatedly denied em-

ployment. They are often perplexed as to the reason for their continual problems in securing employment, and wonder why their prospects of being hired look good until the prospective employer reviews their DD Form 214. One particular veteran who has been in contact with my office has even been passed over on several occasions for individuals who had less education and work experience, and who scored lower than he did on aptitude tests. What these veterans do not realize is that they have been assigned a cryptic SPN code which, in some way, brands them as a less than desirable individual.

The SPN code, which was allegedly designed for use only by the Department of Defense in determining an individual's desirability for reenlistment, has been roundly criticized. The assignment of an SPN code was discretionary, and seemed to be based on no standard criteria. Most veterans do not even know of the existence of these codes on their DD Form 214, and very few veterans actually know what the code means. Yet, through some mysterious means, lists of the code interpretations have been widely made available to large corporations, colleges, and private employers, who can easily look at the veteran's discharge papers and interpret the meaning of the SPN code.

Through use of the SPN code veterans have been unknowingly branded as having character and behavior disorders, as being unfit for multiple but unstated reasons, of having unsanitary habits, of immorality, of being financially irresponsible, of having an antisocial personality, of apathy, of having venereal disease—on and on to about 300 various items. Many, but not all SPN codes are derogatory in nature. From what I have been able to ascertain, SPN codes were assigned on the basis of comments entered by various officers. The basis for such comments could be as arbitrary as a personality conflict between an officer and a serviceman. In the majority of cases there is no concrete evidence to support the remarks—remarks which are merely personal feelings and personal observations. The serviceman is given no opportunity to refute the assignment of an SPN code, and most veterans are completely unaware of the code's existence or meaning.

When certain Members of Congress began questioning the use of SPN codes, the Department of Defense undertook administrative action to eliminate the use of the codes rather than face a congressional investigation and possible legislative action. Veterans were instructed to contact the Department of Defense to obtain a revised copy of their DD Form 214, on which the SPN code would be eliminated. This, however, has proven to be a token gesture on the part of the Department of Defense, and has not solved the problem. The SPN code is still contained on the file copies of a serviceman's records maintained by the Department of Defense. Schools and private employers seem to have an uncanny knack for obtaining a veteran's SPN code, even after the veteran has presented them

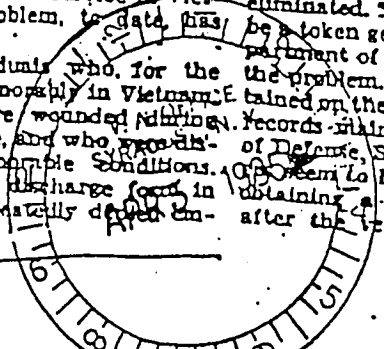
with a revised copy of his DD Form 214 on which the SPN code has been eliminated. In some cases, private employers even refuse to accept the revised DD Form 214, insisting that the veteran furnish them with the original form containing the code and refusing to consider the veteran if he does not do so. To further illustrate the problems which the elusive SPN code has caused veterans, I would like to share with you the case of a veteran from upstate New York who served honorably and had a tour of duty in Vietnam. This veteran's mistake was not in evading his duties, as he personally witnessed the horrors of the Vietnam war. He was appalled by what he saw, and was concerned by the opposition to the war at home. His mistake was that he exercised his constitutional right to freedom of speech and openly voiced his opposition to the war and what he saw—something which an enlisted man apparently could not do without incurring the wrath of his superiors.

Several years later, after a series of temporary jobs and numerous employment denials, this veteran learned that his SPN code indicated that he did not handle his personal affairs in a satisfactory manner. He has stated that he is at a loss in explaining why this code was assigned to him, other than through his vocal opposition to the military's involvement and actions in Vietnam. In reliance on the SPN code, prospective employers have decided that a veteran who cannot handle his own personal affairs in a satisfactory manner could not be trusted to handle his duties on the job in a satisfactory manner. One can only imagine the difficulties which a veteran whose SPN code indicates that he is immoral, or financially irresponsible, or a trouble maker would have in obtaining employment.

Again, it is important to keep in mind that these veterans never faced formal charges for their alleged offenses. They have been given no opportunity to refute the assignment of a derogatory SPN code, and there are no administrative procedures available to these veterans to have the code changed.

While SPN codes are no longer used by the Armed Forces, those veterans discharged prior to May 1974 still have SPN codes on their military records, even though the code may have been eliminated from the copy of the DD Form 214 which they have in their possession. As previously pointed out, the SPN code of a veteran and its meaning seem to be readily available to anyone who is interested in obtaining it.

It is my belief that these veterans have been done a great injustice by the Armed Forces and by society. The voluntary action of the Department of Defense to expunge the SPN code from the veteran's copy of his DD Form 214 has proven to be a farce, and the code must be removed from all copies of the veterans records if justice is to be done. These individuals deserve as much, if not more, consideration than draft evaders and individuals who received less than honorable discharges.



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