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FEDERAL CHARTER TO GOLD STAR WIVES
OF AMERICA, S. 1179

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HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
NINETY-SIXTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
ON
S. 1179

NOVEMBER 16, 1979

Serial No. 96-35

Printed for the use of the Committee on the Judiciary



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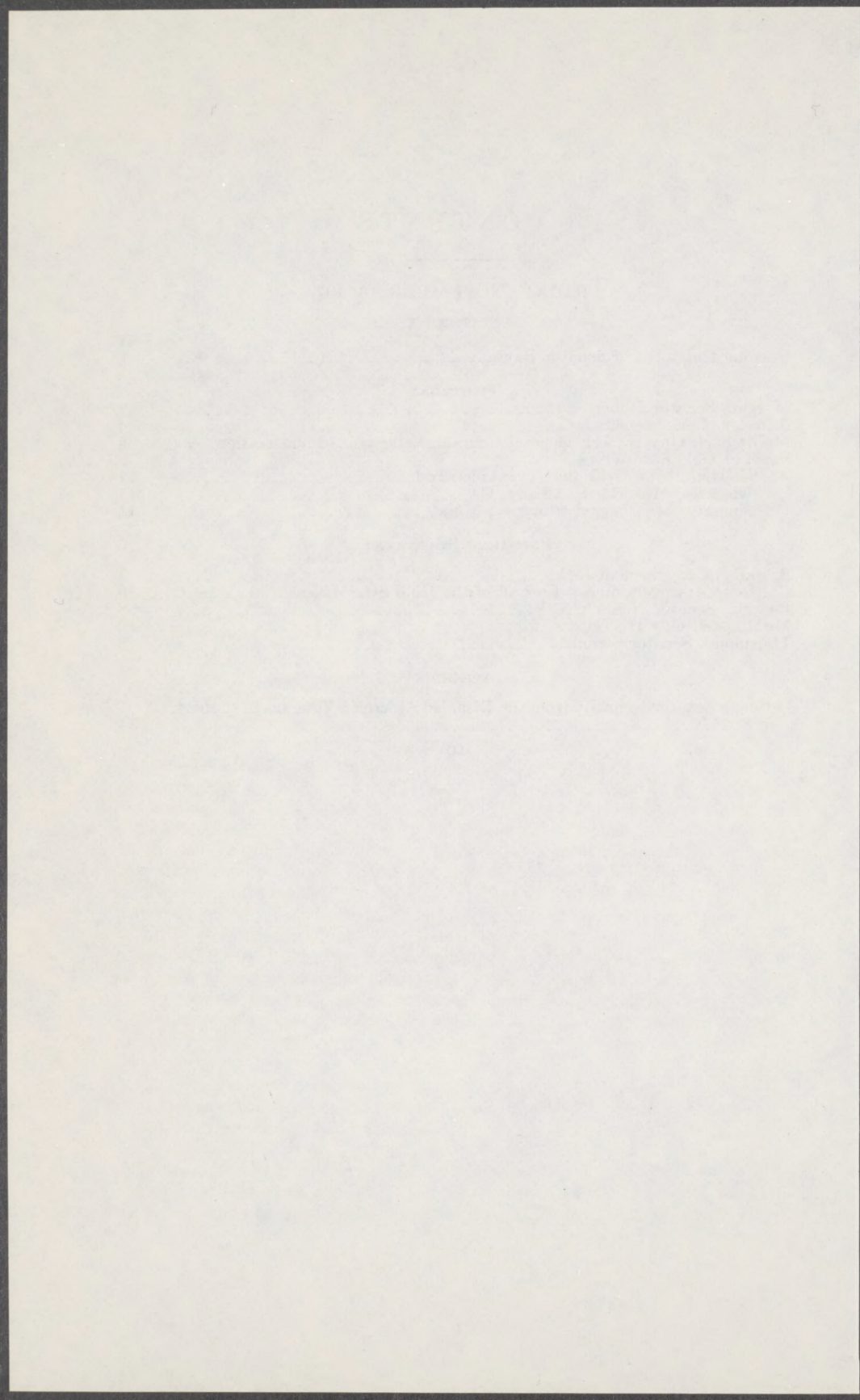
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(III)



FEDERAL CHARTER TO GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, S. 1179

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1979

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:37 a.m., in room 457 of the Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Birch Bayh (acting chairman) presiding.

Present: Senator Bayh.

Senator BAYH. May we have order, please.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BAYH

Senator BAYH. Today our Judiciary Committee holds a hearing on the matter of granting a Federal charter to Gold Star Wives of America. It is a great pleasure for me personally to chair the committee on this particular occasion. I have introduced similar bills to S. 1179, which is the legislation before us, for a long, long time. I think back in 1969 was the first time that the Gold Star Wives and I started working together. It has been a continuing disappointment to me, and I'm sure to those stalwart souls who are persisting, fortunately, that we have not had the opportunity to give national recognition to an organization which in my judgment is so worthy.

Some years ago, the Senate Judiciary Committee decided that for the time being, it would no longer approve Federal charters, regardless of the individual merit of any single request. Gold Star Wives, in my opinion, is one of those organizations which clearly meets standards for a Federal charter set by the Committee on the Judiciary in both the House and the Senate in the 91st Congress. It is also an obvious example of a group for which a charter would mean greater ability to apply its sensitivity to the problem it is dedicated to serve and make it possible to better carry out its services. I am, therefore, pleased that today the committee will have the chance to hear the case for national incorporation of the Gold Star Wives of America. I know of no other group more deserving of national incorporation than the Gold Star Wives of America. Its membership is composed of women who have experienced the great anguish of losing their husbands because of active duty with the military forces of the United States. They have a common bond of grief that few of us can fully understand, but which none of us can forget. Their objectives are both praiseworthy and significant.

What more valuable contribution to society can be made than to bolster the fortitude and uplift the spirit, as well as to aid with advice and counsel, the widows and children of those who paid the supreme sacrifice in the interest of all of us, their fellow citizens.

The Gold Star Wives of America has a role to play that is nationwide in scope and worthy of national recognition. The organization has similar noteworthy accomplishments to those made by other veterans organizations, and similar organizations, which have been granted national charters. However, the organization has repeatedly been hindered and prevented from giving assistance to the young widows who desperately need the help that could have been made available to them through this organization solely because of their lack of a Federal charter. Gold Star Wives of America, known through Survivor Assistance Offices, has been refused at military installations on the basis that the organization is not officially recognized. At other times, members have been humiliated when they have contacted at military bases, and inquiries have been made to the Department of Defense as to the reliability of the Gold Star Wives of America.

I sincerely believe that after the Judiciary Committee has heard the testimony of the witnesses here today, they will have little trouble in giving favorable consideration to the charter of this worthy organization. I consider it an honor to be associated with this organization and with the individuals who have persisted so patiently. We're going to persevere, and we're going to get this charter accomplished if there's any human way to do it. Frankly, I think there is.

It is a privilege to welcome my distinguished colleague who has been equally persistent over the years in pursuit of this goal as our first witness this morning, the Honorable Robert Morgan, the distinguished Senator from North Carolina. Senator, it's good to have you with us this morning.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MORGAN

Senator MORGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank you for your perseverance. You're the one that has worked constantly over the years to bring this charter about, and I hope that we will be able to make an exception to the rule in the Judiciary Committee. Mr. Chairman, I apologize to the other witnesses who are here for going first, but I hope that they will understand that we do have other committee meetings that we have to go to.

I'm sure that I can't add anything new about this bill that the chairman doesn't know, but I hope to add my thoughts for the benefit of the other members of the committee.

Gold Star Wives of America is a service organization founded in 1945, and its members are women whose husbands died either while serving in the Armed Forces or as a result of disabilities incurred in the services. Its primary purpose is to aid the wives and children of men who have died in the service, especially to help them to adjust to their loss so that they can live a happy, helpful, and wholesome life. They also exist to honor the memory of their loved ones, who have made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of all of us, and to generally uphold the principle of our country and our Constitution and the laws of the United States.

A Federal charter is necessary for Gold Star Wives if the organization is going to be able to properly fulfill its valuable role. The possession of or the failure to possess a Federal charter is how both the Department of Defense and the Veterans' Administration decides if

an organization is legitimate. All of the veterans organizations, the American Legion, the DAV, the VFW, and so forth, have Federal charters.

Now, without a Federal charter, members of the Gold Star Wives cannot obtain access to a military base. It cannot, therefore, help new widows immediately following the tragedy when the need may be the most serious. I think it is obvious that widows who have been through such a terrible tragedy, the death of their husband themselves are more capable of providing the necessary aid and comfort to a new widow than an active duty officer. This is true if for no other reason than a military officer, for his own sanity, must to a certain extent harden himself to this kind of tragedy. It would be impossible for such an officer to empathize with the overwhelming grief, the feeling of loss, and the general emptiness that a widow must feel.

Later on only another widow who has been through the situation herself can thoughtfully provide counsel with regard to the emotional and practical problems and difficulties that have to be faced. But the new widow will not know how to get this kind of counsel since she's never had this experience before, and she probably has never heard of the Gold Star Wives since DOD is unlikely to recommend a group that in their eyes has not been legitimized by the Congress.

Without a Federal charter, Gold Star Wives members are usually denied recognition at various veterans' functions, including services at Arlington National Cemetery. The last, I think, is especially ironic, and somewhat distressing to me, since many of the husbands of Gold Star Wives members are buried in that cemetery.

And finally, this bill would help the Gold Star Wives obtain needed and deserved recognition. Many women who are eligible for membership don't belong to this organization, and I'm sure this is only because they don't know of it, or if they do, they remain to be convinced that its membership is worthwhile. The granting of a Federal charter will provide recognition and legitimacy, thereby allowing the Gold Star Wives to develop into a stronger and much more effective organization.

I recognize that some Members of Congress have been concerned about abuses of the Federal charters and about their proliferation, concerns which I'm inclined to share. But, in this case, I think it is clear that an exception is warranted. Mr. Chairman, I might say that the lady in my home State office in Raleigh, Mrs. Jean Joyner, is a Gold Star Wife. Her husband was one of the last lieutenant colonels to be killed in the service, and she has handled for my office the military affairs with my constituents for 5 years now. Because of her understanding of the problems of the military, she has been able to show compassion to the people in the military that I don't think she would have had otherwise. So, I want to commend you again in being so persistent in this matter, and for allowing me to cosponsor it with you. I understand we now have 42 cosponsors in the Senate, and more than that in the House. To me, this indicates that the Judiciary Committee should relax its general opposition to all new charters, and I hope that the committee will report this bill favorably.

Senator BAYH. Senator, I can't thank you enough for adding your voice, as well as your long-time support to this. You're a laudably persistent fellow, and together, I think, if we both keep working on them, we can get this exception. Let's just do our very best. It's really great to be working with you.

Senator MORGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BAYH. Thank you very much. Our next witness is the Honorable Jack Brinkley, our distinguished colleague from Georgia. It's good to have you with us here, Congressman, to lend your support.

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BRINKLEY

Representative BRINKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have with me Miss Anne Cheek of my staff, who, with your permission, will join me here at the witness table.

Senator BAYH. Certainly. It's a pleasure to have her with us.

Representative BRINKLEY. Let me express my gratitude to you for holding this hearing to express the appreciation which I feel by being in the same audience with Mrs. Edith Knowles of Georgia, Mrs. Geraldine Chittick, and Mrs. Peggy Simonfy—I may have pronounced that wrong—but I get to Mrs. Nan Nave, who also served on my staff for many years, who herself is a Gold Star widow. I'm grateful that they have provided the important catalyst to you and to me to sponsor legislation which has been blocked as a matter of policy against granting charters. And while they should not proliferate, they certainly should be granted in matters as important as this, to give comparable status to the Gold Star mothers, to give only one example.

There's an old nursery rhyme that goes, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, Who's the fairest of them all?" I would submit that if we look at Gold Star Wives and consider this legislation, that we would make the judgment that this is a matter of their own identity and self-worth for themselves, as well as the important service which they render to people coming into that same status as the years go by.

As Senator Morgan has indicated, this year alone we have had in the House 54 cosponsors with me in the fight for a Federal charter. Well over 100 of our colleagues in the past have cosponsored this bill, to provide the status deserved which is first-class charter status, rather than second-class forgotten American status.

I am aware of the goals which have been outlined, and I will only cite those and deviate from the record, Mr. Chairman, if I may, if I could incorporate with your permission my written statement for the record.

Senator BAYH. We'll put the statement in the record as if it had been given in total.

Representative BRINKLEY. I think that we should consider the goals. An objective consideration will show the importance of them. There are four: (1) Advising military widows of educational benefits and financial assistance to which they and their children are entitled; (2) promoting activities which encourage among its members the healthy mental outlook necessary to face the future without their husbands; (3) honoring the memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of our country; and (4) safeguarding and transmitting to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy for which the members of our Armed Forces have fought and died.

No other organization for widows and orphans exists in this country. No other organization is as finely tuned to the needs of military widows and orphans and as eagerly willing to accommodate those needs selflessly and unceasingly, without pay.

For a number of years, Gold Star Wives of America has sought a Federal charter to insure recognition as a reputable organization permitted to advise and assist widows and children of servicemen without hindrance. Without such a charter countless widows and orphans cannot be a catalyst to the help that can best be given by those who have themselves endured like hardships.

Mrs. Chittick, whom I recognized earlier, has said very thoughtfully on one occasion, and I would like to quote her:

Efforts to make our organization known through survivor assistance officers at military installations have been refused on the basis of not being recognized as a reputable organization, while in other instances, contacts at military bases have resulted in inquiries going to DOD regarding the reliability of Gold Star Wives of America. Our experience on those occasions would indicate that the only way our organization could acquire the respect and stature so necessary to conduct our activities is through congressional recognition.

We have today before us the exciting opportunity to provide that vehicle, Mr. Chairman, and certainly we can do no less.

Recently the VA gave us a favorable departmental report and to quote Mr. Cleland, who also hails from my native State of Georgia, a triple amputee, "We believe this organization is worthy of the type of recognition which would flow from the granting of a Federal charter, such as is proposed by this bill." Eighteen years ago, during the 1961 Veterans Day address, President John Kennedy said, "In the end, the only way to maintain the peace is to be prepared in the final extreme to fight for our country and mean it."

Mr. Chairman, the husbands of Gold Star Wives fought for our country and meant it, and lost their lives in the process. Let us honor their sacrifice and the ongoing service being provided by their survivors by granting a Federal charter to Gold Star Wives of America. By taking this significant step we will substantially expand the accessibility of this organization's service to thousands more deserving widows and orphans of servicemen throughout our land, and express our continuing appreciation for the perseverance and inspiring dedication of this remarkable group of American women.

Mr. Chairman, one or two final thoughts, if I may. More than 250 years ago Jonathan Swift, writing in *Gulliver's Travels*, said that the man or the woman who could make two blades of grass grow where only one had grown before would do more for their fellowman than the entire race of politicians put together.

Mr. Chairman, this is the promise and the potential of this Gold Star Wives organization. For, in place of one widow they may have two, and when magnified to the boundaries of their existence, they would demonstrate the brotherhood of man, the ability to reach out to the lonely, and to give a hand to those who need them to let them know that they care.

I think it is best expressed, Mr. Chairman, in the thought that good words will again you honor in the marketplace, but good deeds will gain you friends among men. This, I believe, is their philosophy, their motto: to care, to touch the lonely and helpless, the needy, and the afflicted. It's a good bill, Mr. Chairman, and I'm grateful to you for your caring and for your hearings today, and for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

Senator BAYH. It's good to have you here with us, Congressman. May I ask a question, please, relative to procedure in the House. The preceding chairman of the Judiciary Committee had made a decision because of the proliferation of charters that we just flat out wouldn't consider any charters. That's the barrier that we've been bucking here over the last several years. Our new chairman, Senator Kennedy, has taken a look at this, and recognizes the seriousness of the proliferation problem, but also the inequity of an absolute position in opposition to further charters. So the new rule in the Senate, as I recall, is that if you can get 40 cosponsors, and I think at last count we had 44, with at least 15 from each party, that we can move forward. We now have accomplished that goal and that's why we're here. We hope to be able to move very quickly on this because these folks have been very patient. I think the cause is worthy, and certainly there is no need to delay. Do you have any obstacles in the House, so if we get this measure moving quickly we could get it—

Representative BRINKLEY. Mr. Chairman, the chairman has quoted accurately the state of affairs as it has existed in the past. Once again, the Senate is demonstrating leadership by having the 40-sponsor rule, I believe, and in considering this as a very special case. In the past, the House has passed a bill for Gold Star Wives charter, through the District of Columbia committee, to have it chartered in the District of Columbia. That was not the wishes of your Committee on the Judiciary in the Senate. And really it wasn't ours, either. We think that that is minimal where the maximum should be provided.

Nevertheless, the history is there of it having passed as the will of the House in that nature. Chairman Celler, and now Chairman Rodino, who is his predecessor of the Judiciary Committee of the House, have both adhered to the policy of absolutely no Federal charters. Fortunately, I perceive that this may be the year for a breakthrough, because Congressman George Danielson, a distinguished lawyer and a member of the subcommittee which will be handling this legislation, is sympathetic to this legislation. As a matter of fact, in the past Congress he was a cosponsor, so we perceive that there is a receptiveness today that did not exist before, and so, again, it's so important that you have taken the leadership on this matter to hold the hearings. I believe that with the progress being made that it is within the realm of possibility of passage in both Houses of the Congress in order to grant the charter.

Senator BAYH. We're certainly going to persist on this. I think all of us who are interested in Gold Star Wives are grateful to Senator Kennedy for helping to break this position of absolute prohibition.

Representative BRINKLEY. Mr. Chairman, I might say, we, too, are grateful to Senator Kennedy. Miss Cheek of my staff has conferred with members of his staff and, I believe, with members of your committee here and with your staff. It's a community of interests which we think is very becoming. We thank all of you.

Senator BAYH. I've been discussing this with my chief staff aide here, Marcia Atcheson, who's been really a tower of strength in moving on this. We're going to work as rapidly as we can after our hearings to get everything pulled together and try to get it considered as quickly as we can by the committee and that way we can get it out on the floor, hopefully, and give you something to work with over there. Good to have you here with us.

Representative BRINKLEY. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Congressman Brinkley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN JACK BRINKLEY

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before this distinguished panel in behalf of an objective that has been a priority concern to me for years: The granting of a Federal charter to the Gold Star Wives of America.

This year alone, 54 House cosponsors have joined with me in the fight for a Federal charter, and well over 100 of my colleagues have cosponsored this vital Federal charter legislation in years past.

As sponsor of H.R. 154—House companion legislation to S. 1179, the subject of today's hearing—I am keenly aware of the splendid goals and excellent track record of service set by the Gold Star Wives of America. This organization is a unique group of widows bound together not only by the common tragedy of losing their husbands in the line of military duty but by a firm commitment to making this great burden easier for others to bear.

Gold Star Wives of America was founded in 1945. Prior to that time there was no organization to which the thousands of widows and fatherless children of American servicemen could turn for help and understanding counsel. Foremost among the purposes outlined by the Gold Star Wives founders and still actively followed today are: (1) Advising military widows of educational benefits and financial assistance to which they and their children are entitled, (2) promoting activities which encourage among its members the healthy mental outlook necessary to face the future without their husbands, (3) honoring the memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of our country, and (4) safeguarding and transmitting to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy for which the members of our Armed Forces have fought and died.

No other organization of widows for widows and orphans exists in this country. No other organization is as finely tuned to the needs of military widows and orphans and as eagerly willing to accommodate those needs selflessly and unceasingly, without pay.

For a number of years, Gold Star Wives of America has sought a Federal charter to insure recognition as a reputable organization permitted to advise and assist widows and children of servicemen without hindrance. Without such a charter, countless widows and orphans will be denied the help that can best be given by those who have suffered through similar hardships.

Mrs. Geraldine Chittick, national legislative chairman of Gold Star Wives of America, who has for so long helped to lead the fight for a Federal charter, and who is with us today, has movingly described the problems Gold Star Wives face without a Federal charter: "Efforts to make our organization known through survivor assistance officers at military installations have been refused on the basis of not being recognized as a reputable organization, while in other instances, contacts at military bases have resulted in inquiries going to the Department of Defense regarding the reliability of Gold Star Wives of America. Our experience on these occasions would indicate that the only way our organization could acquire the respect and stature so necessary to conduct our activities is through congressional recognition."

We have today the exciting opportunity to furnish the very vehicle which will accomplish this crucial congressional recognition—the granting of a Federal charter. And certainly, we can do no less.

In the Veterans' Administration's favorable departmental report on our Gold Star Wives Federal charter legislation, VA Administrator Max Cleland stated, "We believe this organization is worthy of the type of recognition which would flow from the granting of a Federal charter, such as is proposed by this bill."

Eighteen years ago, during his 1961 Veterans Day address, President John F. Kennedy said, "In the end, the only way to maintain the peace is to be prepared in the final extreme to fight for our country and to mean it." Mr. Chairman, the husbands of Gold Star Wives fought for our country and meant it, and lost their lives in so doing.

Let us honor their sacrifice and the ongoing service being provided by their widows by granting a Federal charter to the Gold Star Wives of America. By taking this significant step, we will (1) substantially expand the accessibility of this organization's services to thousands more deserving widows and orphans of servicemen throughout our land, and (2) express our continuing appreciation for the perseverance and inspiring dedication of this remarkable group of American women.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BAYH. I would like to ask our recorder, if she would, to place the statement by our distinguished ranking member of the committee, Senator Thurmond, in the record. He got tied up and couldn't be here. And Senator Jackson, although he's not a member of the committee, is, of course, always interested in this kind of particular problem to the country, and he has a statement I'd like to ask to be placed in the record at this time.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR THURMOND

Mr. Chairman, I welcome all of the witnesses to this hearing today. Since 1969, bills to grant a Federal charter to the Gold Star Wives of America have been introduced in the Congress. Prior efforts have been unsuccessful. The Gold Star Wives are women whose husbands died serving this Nation in our Armed Forces. I can think of no group to which our country owes more. I can think of no group which the Congress should be more ready to help.

A Federal charter for the Gold Star Wives will mean not only official recognition, but it will also mean that assistance, advice and vitally needed information will be forthcoming. This is little to ask. As a cosponsor of this legislation, I pledge my efforts to making a charter for the Gold Star Wives a reality in the 96th Congress.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACKSON

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of S. 1179 which would grant a Federal charter to the Gold Star Wives of America.

They have sought such a charter for many years and have received favorable assistance from the House of Representatives and the approval of the Veterans' Administration. A hearing was conducted by the Senate Judiciary Committee, but no further action has been taken by the Senate until now.

As we all know, it is very difficult for women to adjust to the deaths of their husbands. It is especially true when they have children and are uninformed as to their rights and privileges for themselves and their children.

For years my mail has revealed that many widows are nearly totally uninformed about their entitlements and lack of entitlements. With the dissemination of accurate information, which would be possible if a Federal charter were granted, newly bereaved widows and others could be greatly assisted in a humanitarian manner.

By granting a Federal charter, information, advice, and assistance would become more readily available to families in need of such information.

The granting of a Federal charter is a very small contribution to make to those women who have given so much, and I hope this proposal will be given careful consideration.

Senator BAYH. We're honored to have the General Counsel of the Veterans' Administration, Mr. Guy H. McMichael, to give the position of the Veterans' Administration. It's a privilege to have you here, Mr. McMichael, and I hope you will convey appreciation to the Administrator. As a working colleague, and as a friend, he is one of those men of whom it can honestly be said, he is all heart. Our country is privileged to have a man like him serving the veterans. It's a privilege for me to know him, not only as a working colleague, but as a friend.

STATEMENT OF GUY McMICHAEL

Mr. McMICHAEL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll be happy to convey those views. I know he's had a great association with you, and has joined with you in inspecting VA medical facilities in the State of Indiana. I'd also like to take the opportunity to introduce two people who have accompanied me: Mr. John Deleo, assistant general counsel, and Nan Nave, who serves as a special assistant to Mr. Cleland, and who, in the interest of disclosure, would like you to know that she's a member of the Gold Star Wives.

Senator BAYH. It's good to have both those distinguished public servants here also. Glad you corrected my inadvertent omission there.

Mr. McMICHAEAL. With your permission I'll submit my entire statement for the record, I'd just like to say briefly that S. 1179 would incorporate the Gold Star Wives of America. While it contains no explicit reference to the Veterans' Administration, it does provide in section 12 that provisions, privileges, and prerogatives that have been granted heretofore to other national veterans organizations, by virtue of their being incorporated by Congress, would also be granted to the Gold Star Wives.

Under section 3402 of title 38, the Administrator is authorized to recognize certain representatives of national groups, such as the American National Red Cross, the American Legion, DAV, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and so on, in the presentation, preparation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by this agency. He further has the discretion with respect to national organizations to provide space and office facilities, if space is available, for paid full-time representatives of those organizations.

I might add that congressional chartering is not required for the recognition of service organizations for the purpose of addressing claims. We have recently revised our regulations in this respect and, this past February, we did recognize the Gold Star Wives for that purpose.

The chartering of a service organization, however, would provide the opportunity for office space where facilities did exist, and it also confers certain status in relation both to Federal and State laws. We can't estimate any particular cost to this proposal. We don't think it would be significant, however.

With respect to the question of desirability of granting a charter, we note that Congress over the years has granted approximately 348 charters. In 1969, I think in response to concern about proliferation of this, a new set of standards were applied in the granting of Federal charters, which were jointly agreed upon. These standards are intended to be applied to all those proposing Federal charters to achieve some uniformity of approach to the legislation. Standards were further revised and updated on April 1, 1977.

Since the basic revision of the charters in 1969, it is my understanding that approximately nine charters have been granted. So the standard basically is that charters will be granted only on a very selective basis, and only to organizations clearly warranting Federal recognition. As Congressman Brinkley has noted, we believe that the standards promulgated by the Judiciary Subcommittee are appropriate, and should be considered in the case of the Gold Star Wives. Whether or not such an organization meets the standards is basically a judgment that the Congress would make. However, we do believe that this organization is worthy of the type of recognition which would flow from the granting of a charter.

I notice that you have 44 members, I believe, that have cosponsored this legislation, which is an indication of the consensus which is developing within the Senate that a charter would be appropriate. I might just add a personal note. I served for 6 years on the staff of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and during that time had the opportunity to get to know Mrs. Chittick, who is, as you know, a very forceful advocate for the Gold Star Wives. It was my general impression then that oftentimes the needs of the survivors of veterans don't

receive as full attention as they might from veterans organizations who are understandably concerned with the large number of veterans and their problems. It was principally through Mrs. Chittick and the Gold Star Wives that we had brought to our attention, on a consistent basis, the needs of the survivors of veterans. For that reason, I might say in a personal note, that I would think that the granting of a charter would be highly appropriate in this instance.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McMichael follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GUY H. McMICALHAIL III

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

I am pleased to appear before you this morning in response to your request for the views of the Veterans' Administration on S. 1179, 96th Congress, which would incorporate the Gold Star Wives of America.

The proposed corporation would be a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization with certain powers, limitations, and restrictions as defined in the bill.

The bill contains no reference to the Veterans' Administration, however, it does provide in section 12 that "* * * provisions, privileges, and prerogatives as have been granted heretofore to other national veterans' organizations by virtue of their being incorporated by Congress are hereby granted and accrue to the Gold Star Wives of America." Under section 3402 of title 38, U.S. Code, the Administrator of Veterans Affairs is authorized to recognize representatives of the American National Red Cross, the American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans, the United Spanish War Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, and such other organizations as he may approve, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by this agency. Within his discretion, the Administrator may furnish space and office facilities for the use of paid full-time representatives of national organizations as recognized.

Under current VA regulations (38 CFR sec. 14.628 (July 1, 1979)), which implements 38 U.S.C. section 3402, congressional chartering is not required for recognition of a service organization for the purpose of preparing, presenting, and prosecuting claims under laws administered by the VA. Chartering is, however, required to establish eligibility for the furnishing of available office facilities for the use of paid full-time representatives of "national" service organizations. (VA regulations 5628(A) (38 CFR sec. 14.628(a); 5637 (38 CFR sec. 14.637) (July 1, 1979)).

On February 28, 1979, the VA recognized the Gold Star Wives of America. The criteria for such recognition, set forth in our regulations, are that the organization have as its primary purpose, service to veterans; demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of those veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans; shall devote an appreciable portion of its assets to veterans' services; shall establish either that complete claims service will be provided to each veteran requesting representation, or shall give written notice of any limitation in its claims service with advice concerning alternate service, and shall take affirmative action, such as training and monitoring of its recognized representatives, to insure proper handling of claims. In accordance with this recognition, Mrs. Margaret Vegeler of Fort Wayne, Ind., has been accredited as a claims representative.

Chartering of a service organization confers preferred status in relation to various Federal laws. For example, the Internal Revenue Code provides a tax exempt status on the income of these organizations when no part of the net earnings inures to the benefit of any private individual (26 U.S.C. sec. 170(c)). Furthermore, individuals who make contributions to these types of organizations, can make the appropriate deduction on their income tax.

We cannot estimate the cost of the proposal if it should become law. The only significant element of cost would be that arising from the resultant eligibility of the organization to apply for necessary space and suitable office facilities.

With respect to the question of desirability of granting a Federal charter to the Gold Star Wives of America, we note that Congress has granted 348 such charters over the years. In 1969, a set of standards to be applied in the granting of Federal charters was jointly agreed on, after a study of this matter, by the Subcommittee of Federal Charters, Holidays, and Celebrations of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and Subcommittee No. 4 of the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives. These standards are intended to be applied to all legislation

proposing Federal charters, to achieve some uniformity of approach to such legislation. The standards were updated and revised by the subcommittee on April 1, 1977. We understand that these standards are designed to provide consistent and stringent criteria for the granting of Federal charters so that they will be granted only on a very selective basis and only to organizations clearly warranting Federal recognition.

We believe the standards promulgated by the Judiciary Subcommittee are appropriate and should be considered in the case of the Gold Star Wives of America. Whether or not the organization meets these standards is a question which we defer to the judgment of the Congress. However, we believe this organization is worthy of the type of recognition which would flow from the granting of a Federal charter, such as is proposed by this bill.

Mr. Chairman, this completes my formal presentation. My associates and I will be pleased to answer any questions.

Senator BAYH. Thank you very much, Mr. McMichael. We appreciate your being here not only as representative of the Veterans' Administration, but we also appreciate your personal opinion, because of your past experience with the Veterans Committee. I think the record should show, if I might be forgiven a bit of provincialism, that it is a privilege to welcome a fellow Hoosier serving his country in a different capacity now. It's not unique that we would be championing similar goals to try to help these women help other women. They certainly deserve this kind of recognition from their Government.

Mr. McMICHAEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BAYH. Thank you very much. I don't want to belabor you any more than is necessary. It's good to have you here.

PANEL OF GOLD STAR WIVES:

**STATEMENTS OF MRS. GERALDINE CHITTICK, FRANKFORT, IND.;
MRS. EDITH KNOWLES, ALBANY, GA.; AND MRS. PEGGY SIMONFY,
CHICOPEE, MASS.**

Senator BAYH. Now if we could have our distinguished panel of Gold Star Wives, we will proceed: Mrs. Geraldine Chittick of Frankfort, Ind.; Mrs. Edith Knowles of Albany, Ga.; and Mrs. Peggy Simonfy of Chicopee, Mass.

Mrs. CHITTICK. Senator Bayh, I thank you, and the Gold Star Wives of America thank you for getting this hearing scheduled, and we appreciate this consideration of S. 1179, to incorporate the organization and grant a Federal charter to the Gold Star Wives of America. Some of the material I have prepared is repetitious to some that has already been recorded, and I may skip over a few portions of it, but I would request that the statement in its entirety be included in the record.

Gold Star Wives of America came into existence in 1945, when World War II was leaving thousands of widows and fatherless children in its wake. Existing organizations had been established on the basis of the war involved (such as Widows of World War I). Therefore, there was no organization to which to turn for understanding advice and assistance. From the small nucleus of just a few widows meeting in New York City, membership spread throughout the country, and whenever a sufficient number of members were residing near enough, chapters were formed.

The membership of Gold Star Wives of America is comprised of women whose husbands died while a member of the Armed Forces of our country, or who died subsequent to such service as a result of injury or disability incurred during active service. Membership is open to survivors of all wars and conflicts, regardless of rank, race or creed. Remarried widows remain eligible for membership. The objectives and purposes of Gold Star Wives were well chosen at the time of its founding and remain amazingly appropriate to the needs of today. They are all listed in my statement. Some of them have already been mentioned. We particularly like to give emphasis to three of them: One, to aid when necessary the widows and children of persons who died in the service of our country; two, to provide the benefits of a happy, healthful, and wholesome life to minor children of persons who died in the service of our country; and three, to promote activities and interests designed to foster among its members the proper mental attitude to face the future with courage.

For a number of years Gold Star Wives of America has been seeking a Federal charter. I might insert here that just this past week I was privileged to find one of the older scrapbooks of our organization, and found that the very first charter bill that was introduced was in April 1947. We have repeatedly been hindered and prevented from giving the assistance, advice, and emotional support to new widows that could, and should, have been available to them through Gold Star Wives. Countless widows and children have been denied the help available to them from the organization of persons capable of completely understanding their problems.

Efforts to make our organization known through survivor assistance officers at military installations during the Vietnam conflict were denied on the basis of our not being recognized as a reputable organization. Our national president sent letters to military bases to make known the available assistance of Gold Star Wives of America. This led to an investigation of our organization by the Department of Defense, and although we were assured verbally that our organization was legitimate, the DOD could not send this information out to bases because we had not been granted a Federal charter.

I was once dismissed after a long period of waiting for clearance by them showing me a listing of hundreds of organizations claiming to be able to help war widows. Although they were sorry to deny me the interview, they hoped we would realize that there were hundreds of organizations, too many of which are of an unscrupulous nature for them to make any exceptions to DOD sanction.

Gold Star Wives of America officers have endured numerous instances of lack of recognition at veterans functions, including services at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as ground-breaking ceremonies for new national cemeteries. This situation has just recently been rectified by the Administrator of the Veterans' Administration. Prior to this time, the sole reason for this lack of recognition was the lack of this evasive Federal charter.

Our organization is cognizant of the standards for the granting of Federal charters as approved, and I would like to address ourselves to the four standards as set forth:

(1) OPERATION UNDER A STATE CHARTER

Gold Star Wives of America was incorporated in the State of New York on December 15, 1945, as a nonprofit national service organization. Membership is nationwide with members in almost every State and 32 chapters located in 20 States. We take pride in the fact that although the organization was formed by World War II widows and the first incorporation papers were filed for American Widows of World War II, sound advice was heeded at that time that this name would be too limiting. Therefore the name of Gold Star Wives of America was selected, so that it could include all service widows.

The Korean and Vietnam conflicts reflected the wisdom of that decision. The thousands of additional widows and orphans did have a national organization to which to turn. Getting this information to these families, or Gold Star Wives knowing their names to enable a contact, proved to be a serious problem. Unless the survivor assistance officer initiated a program of cooperation through his personal knowledge of the organization and what it could do in the way of assistance, the contacts were very limited and often unsatisfactory

(2) ORGANIZED AND OPERATED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AS A NON-PARTISAN AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WITH TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP AND REQUIREMENTS FOR HOLDING OFFICE WHICH ARE NOT DISCRIMINATORY ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

Membership is, and always has been, to all widows of all members of the Armed Forces whose deaths are determined to be service connected. Rank nor branch of service of the serviceman has any bearing on a widow's status with Gold Star Wives of America. The initiation ceremony for Gold Star Wives officers best expresses and illustrates the code under which this organization functions:

Always remember the tolerant spirit that animates the Gold Star Wives. Allow no distinction of class or creed to appear among its members, for each serves as the equal to her fellow members and all strive toward the same goal, which is justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty.

Any member can be elected to any local, regional, or national office of Gold Star Wives. Legislative power is delegated to past national presidents, national officers, committee chairmen, the 15 members of the board of directors, regional presidents, chapter presidents, chapter delegates, and members at large. The only requirements for holding office are the ability the position requires and the willingness to devote sufficient time to accomplish the assignment.

Annual dues have been kept purposely low in order that every widow can afford to be a member of Gold Star Wives of America. The national treasury receives \$3 of the \$5 dues and the local chapter—or region for members at large—retains \$2. One large fundraising project on a national basis is conducted each year—a stay-at-home tea. This plan has been in use almost 20 years and was originally initiated as a means of funding a memorial to our husbands. This memorial was established by providing the 52 State markers in the

Congressional Medal of Honor Grove at Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. This took place on Constitution Day, September 17, 1969. Proceeds from this successful fundraising venture have also made it possible to establish a \$500 annual welfare project contribution to the community of the hostessing chapter of the national convention each year. I do have an attachment to the statement listing the recipients and the places where these funds have gone.

Gold Star Wives of America does not maintain a national office other than at the home of the current national president. There are no salaried officers or employees. National officers and committee chairmen are granted modest allowances for conducting their assignments.

- (3) ORGANIZED AND OPERATED SOLELY FOR CHARITABLE, EDUCATIONAL, PATRIOTIC, OR CIVIC IMPROVEMENT PURPOSES, AND MAINTAINS TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

Whether this country is at peace and maintaining only its basic defense programs or is involved in armed conflict, we have learned that there is a continual and ongoing need for the type of advice, assistance and support that only widows are capable of giving to another widow. Regardless of race or creed, we are able to communicate on an understanding basis not available through any person or organization. There is always that painful adjustment that a widow must make from a member of the military community to a member of the civilian community.

In addition to charitable and civic improvement activities already mentioned as national programs, the local chapters assume numerous and varied activities and projects in their communities as a service organization and cooperate with local civic and other veterans organizations in participation in patriotic observances.

Members at large also perform charitable and volunteer work in the name of Gold Star Wives of America, and attached to the statement is a listing of some of those that show the scope of the activities, both charitable, patriotic and civic interests.

[Attachments 1 to 8 follow the prepared statement.]

Mrs. CHITTICKS. Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., maintains IRS No. 43-605-359 under section 501(c) of title 26, United States Code.

- (4) ORGANIZED AND OPERATED FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE NATIONAL IN SCOPE, AND RESPONSIVE TO A NATIONAL NEED SO AS TO JUSTIFY FEDERAL INCORPORATION

Gold Star Wives of America officers, directors, and members, although limited in numbers, have rendered sincere and understanding support, assistance and advice which only a widow can extend to another widow. Regardless of the best intentions of other veterans organizations to be of assistance, the fact remains that the only person who can be completely aware of a widow's problem is another widow. We know from experience and documented accounts in our files that members of our organization have provided the emotional stability necessary to enable a new service widow to face the future with courage, or to face the future at all.

Throughout the years many painful experiences have been further complicated by unfortunate complications surrounding survivor benefits. We take pride in the fact that innumerable errors have been corrected through our knowledge and assistance. Also attached to this statement is a listing of some excerpts from the survey our membership made in 1975 and from letters that provides testimony of the ways Gold Star Wives has been helpful.

[The material referred to above can be found in the appendix.]

Mrs. CHITTICKS. There is no question about there being a national need for the services of Gold Star Wives of America. The unfortunate aspect is that thousands of service widows do not know there is a Gold Star Wives of America. We are striving to eliminate the restrictions we have encountered. Had Gold Star Wives been federally chartered during the Vietnam years, all new widows would have been able to know there was an organization in existence.

The officers and directors of Gold Star Wives of America believe that our organization definitely does provide a unique service throughout the Nation that is unavailable from any other organization. An account of our membership by States is attached, along with the chapter locations.

[The material referred to can be found in the appendix.]

Mrs. CHITTICK. It has been the inability of Gold Star Wives of America to achieve an identity of its own, which has hindered the organization at almost every turn in its efforts to make it known that we were available to be of service and assistance to other service widows. Gold Star Wives of America is not an auxiliary of any organization. Therefore, we have no sponsor. A widow's sponsor is her deceased husband, and therein lies much of our problem. It is essential that Gold Star Wives of America establish an identity of its own. A Federal charter could make this goal attainable.

Gold Star Wives of America is not interested in being granted a Federal charter other than to be recognized as a reputable organization and, therefore, be permitted to advise and assist all widows of servicemen and to be accorded the public recognition given other national organizations. The privilege of a Federal charter would not be used as an endorsement for fundraising.

We deserve to be granted the dignity of congressional endorsement in order that never again will any individual, organization, group, or department of any branch of our Government have reason to question the integrity of Gold Star Wives of America. We further believe that as an organization of those who have borne the brunt of this country's armed conflicts and defense the past 40 years, Gold Star Wives of America should not continually be called upon to defend its integrity because it lacks congressional recognition, in other words, a Federal charter. We trust this committee will determine that Gold Star Wives of America merits the incorporation provided for in S. 1179. I thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Chittick follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GERALDINE B. CHITTICK,
GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.

Senator Kennedy and members of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary: Gold Star Wives of America thanks you for scheduling this hearing and appreciates the consideration of S. 1179 to incorporate this organization and thereby grant a Federal Charter to Gold Star Wives of America.

Gold Star Wives of America came into existence in 1945 when World War II was leaving thousands of widows and fatherless children in its wake. Existing organizations had been established on the basis of the war involved (such as Widows of World War I); therefore, there was no organization to which to turn for understanding, advice and assistance. From the small nucleus of a few widows meeting in New York City, membership spread throughout the country, and wherever a sufficient number of members resided near enough, chapters were formed. The membership of Gold Star Wives of America is comprised of women whose husbands died while a member of the armed forces of our country, or who died subsequent to such service as a result of injury or disability incurred during active service. Membership is open to survivors of all wars and conflicts regardless of rank, race, or creed. Remarried widows remain eligible for membership.

The objectives and purposes of Gold Star Wives of America were well chosen at the time of its founding and remain amazingly appropriate for the needs of today. They are:

To assist in upholding the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, and to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, State and Nation;

To honor the memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of our country;

To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy for which members of our armed services fought and died;

To provide the benefits of a happy, healthful and wholesome life to minor children of persons who died in the service of our country;

To promote activities and interests designed to foster among its members the proper mental attitude to face the future with courage;

To aid when necessary the widows and children of persons who died in the service of our country;

To do any and all things necessary and incidental to carry out the general purposes and objects of this organization.

For a number of years, Gold Star Wives of America has been seeking a Federal charter so that our organization might be accorded the provisions, privileges and prerogatives that have been granted other national organizations. A Federal charter is not sought for prestige; it is sought to enable Gold Star Wives of America to render the assistance the organization is capable of providing the families of deceased servicemen. Earlier efforts for incorporation were temporarily abandoned until it became apparent in 1967 during a conference of our national officers with the Veterans' Administrator's staff that the objectives of our organization could not be attained without a Federal charter. We were advised to make attainment of a Federal charter priority legislation. Incorporation bills have been introduced in every Congress since 1969. The continuing problems encountered because of this lack of a Federal charter have provided the impetus for the unrelenting efforts to obtain this necessary Federal charter.

We have repeatedly been hindered and prevented from giving the assistance, advice, and emotional support to new widows that could and should have been available to them through Gold Star Wives. Countless widows and children have been denied the help available to them from the only organization of persons capable of completely understanding their problems. Efforts to make our organization known through survivor assistance officers at military installations during the Vietnam conflict were denied on the basis of our not being recognized as a "reputable" organization. Our national president sent letters to military bases to make known the available assistance of Gold Star Wives of America. This led to an investigation of our organization by the Department of Defense, and although we were assured verbally that our organization was "legitimate," the DOD could not send this information out to bases because we had not been granted a Federal Charter. As national president of Gold Star Wives of America in 1970, I sought to speak with a survivor assistance officer at my nearest military base. For over 1 hour I was kept waiting while efforts were made to find some justification for permitting me to see him. Gold Star Wives of America was not on their list of acceptable organizations, but a call to the Pentagon assured them we would be on it if we had a Federal charter. In dismissing me, I was shown a long list of organizations, all claiming to be able to help war widows. Although they were sorry to deny me the interview, they hoped we would realize that there were hundreds of organizations, too many of an unscrupulous nature, for them to make any exceptions to DOD sanction.

Gold Star Wives of America officers have endured numerous instances of lack of recognition at veterans' functions, including services at Arlington National Cemetery as well as groundbreaking ceremonies for new national cemeteries.

This situation has just recently been rectified by the Administrator of the Veterans' Administration. Prior to this time, the sole reason for this lack of recognition was the lack of this evasive Federal charter.

Our organization is cognizant of the "Standards for the Granting of Federal Charters," as approved by the subcommittee on April 1, 1977. Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. conforms to the minimum standards as follows:

(1) OPERATION UNDER A STATE CHARTER

Gold Star Wives of America was incorporated in the State of New York on December 15, 1945 as a nonprofit national service organization. Membership is nationwide with members in almost every State and 32 chapters located in 20 States. We take pride in the fact that although the organization was formed by World War II widows and the first incorporation papers were filed for American Widows of World War II, sound advice was heeded that this name would be too limiting. Therefore, the name of Gold Star Wives of America was selected so that it could include all service widows. The Korean and Vietnam conflicts reflected the wisdom of that decision, the thousands of additional widows and orphans did have a national organization to which to turn! Getting this information to these families, or Gold Star Wives knowing their names to enable a contact, proved to be a serious problem. Unless the survivor assistance officer initiated a program of cooperation through his personal knowledge of the organization and what it could do in the way of assistance, the contacts were very limited and often unsatisfactory.

(2) ORGANIZED AND OPERATED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AS A NONPARTISAN AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WITH TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP AND REQUIREMENTS FOR HOLDING OFFICE WHICH ARE NOT DISCRIMINATORY ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

Membership is, and always has been, open to all widows of all members of the armed forces whose deaths are determined to be service connected. Rank nor branch of service of the serviceman has any bearing on a widow's status with Gold Star Wives of America. The installation ceremony for Gold Star Wives officers best expresses and illustrates the code under which the organization functions: "Always remember the tolerant spirit that animates the Gold Star Wives. Allow no distinction of class or creed to appear among its members, for each serves as the equal to her fellow members and all strive toward the same goal, which is justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty." Any member can be elected to any local, regional, or national office of Gold Star Wives of America. Legislative power is delegated to past national presidents, national officers, committee chairmen, the 15 members of the board of directors, regional presidents, chapter presidents, chapter delegates, and members-at-large. The only requirement for holding office are the ability the position requires and the willingness to devote sufficient time to accomplish the assignment.

Annual dues have been kept purposely low in order that every widow can afford to be a member of Gold Star Wives of America. The national treasury receives \$3 of the \$5 dues and the local chapter (or region for members-at-large) retains \$2. One large fund-raising project on a national basis is conducted each year, a Stay-at-Home Tea whereby all members receive a tea bag through the mail and are invited to participate on an individual or chapter basis and send her donation to the board member conducting the project. This plan has been in use almost 20 years and was originally initiated as a means of funding a memorial to our husbands. This memorial was established by providing the 52 State markers in the Congressional Medal of Honor Grove at Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. This ceremony took place on Constitution Day, September 17, 1969. Proceeds from this successful fund-raising venture have also made it possible to establish a \$500 annual Welfare Project contribution to the community of the hostessing chapter of the national convention each year. These donations have gone to Veterans' Administration hospitals at Atlanta, San Diego, and Fort Snelling; also, Fitzsimmons Hospital in Denver; Community Drug Program in Columbus, Ga.; Chapel Fund at Jefferson Barracks, Mo.; the Buttonwood-Evergreen Halls home for the emotionally disturbed in N.J.; Orlando, Fla. projects for the retarded; the "Comforter of the Afflicted Home" for severely retarded and handicapped children in Toledo, Ohio; the Jeanine Schulz Day School for handicapped children in Park Ridge, Ill.; and an inner-city neighborhood project in Hartford, Conn. Remaining proceeds from the fund-raising are used to supplement rising costs for postage, national newsletter publication, and other ongoing expenditures for the programs of the organization.

Gold Star Wives of America does not maintain a national office other than at the home of the current national president. There are no salaried officers or employees. National officers and committee chairmen are granted modest allowances for conducting their assignments.

- (3) ORGANIZED AND OPERATED SOLELY FOR CHARITABLE, EDUCATIONAL, PATRIOTIC OR CIVIC IMPROVEMENT PURPOSES, AND MAINTAINS TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

Whether this country is at peace and maintaining only its basic defense programs or is involved in armed conflict, we have learned that there is a continual and ongoing need for the type of advice, assistance, and support that only a widow is capable of giving to another widow. Regardless of race or creed, we are able to communicate on an understanding basis not available through any other persons or organizations. There is always that painful adjustment that a widow must make from a member of the military community to a member of the civilian community.

In addition to charitable and civic improvement activities already listed as national programs, the local chapters assume numerous and varied activities and projects in their communities as a service organization and cooperate with local civic and other veterans organizations in participation in patriotic observances. Members-at-large also perform charitable and volunteer work in the name of Gold Star Wives of America. A listing is attached of some of the activities reported during the past year. This indicates the scope of charitable, patriotic, and civic interests of Gold Star Wives.

Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. maintains IRS No. 43-605-359 under section 501 (c) of title 26, United States Code.

- (4) ORGANIZED AND OPERATED FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE NATIONAL IN SCOPE, AND RESPONSIVE TO A NATIONAL NEED SO AS TO JUSTIFY FEDERAL INCORPORATION

Gold Star Wives of America officers, directors, and members, although limited in numbers, have rendered sincere and understanding support, assistance, and advice which only a widow can extend to another widow. Regardless of the best intentions of other veterans organizations to be of assistance, the fact remains that the only person who can be completely aware of a widow's problem is another widow. We know from experience and documented accounts in our files that members of our organization have provided the emotional stability necessary to enable a new service widow to "face the future with courage," and, in some instances, to even face the future at all. Throughout the years, many painful experiences have been further complicated by unfortunate complications surrounding survivor benefits. We take pride in the fact that innumerable errors have been corrected through our knowledge and assistance. An attachment to this statement lists some of the excerpts from a survey of our membership and provides testimony of the ways Gold Star Wives has been helpful.

There is no question about there being a national need for the services of Gold Star Wives of America. The unfortunate aspect is that thousands of service widows do not know there is a Gold Star Wives of America. We are striving to eliminate the restrictions we have encountered. Had Gold Star Wives been federally chartered during the Vietnam years, all new widows would have been able to know there was an organization in existence. The officers and directors of Gold Star Wives of America believe that our organization definitely does provide a unique service throughout the nation that is unavailable from any other organization. A count of the membership by States is attached, along with a chapter count by geographic location.

It has been the inability of Gold Star Wives of America to achieve an identity of its own which has hindered the organization at almost every turn in its efforts to make it known that we were available to be of service and assistance to other service widows. Gold Star Wives of America is not an auxiliary of any organization; therefore, we have no sponsor. A widow's sponsor is her deceased husband, and therein lies much of our problem. It is essential that Gold Star Wives of America establish an identity of its own. A Federal charter could make this goal attainable.

Gold Star Wives of America is not interested in being granted a Federal charter other than to be recognized as a reputable organization and thereby be permitted to advise and assist all widows of servicemen and to be accorded the public recognition given other national organizations. The privilege of a Federal charter would not be used as an endorsement for fund-raising.

We deserve to be granted the dignity of congressional endorsement in order that never again will any individual, organization, group, or department of any branch of our government have reason to question the integrity of Gold Star Wives of America. We further believe that, as an organization of those who have borne the brunt of this country's armed conflicts and defense the past 40 years, Gold Star Wives of America should not continuously be called upon to defend its integrity because it lacks Congressional recognition—in other words, a Federal charter.

We trust that this committee will determine that Gold Star Wives of America merits the incorporation provided for in S. 1179. Thank you!

Attachment 1

1979 COUNT OF GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA MEMBERS BY STATES

ALABAMA	60	NEBRASKA	20
ALASKA	1	NEVADA	4
ARIZONA	11	NEW HAMPSHIRE	5
ARKANSAS	5	NEW JERSEY	62
CALIFORNIA	109	NEW MEXICO	1
COLORADO	152	NEW YORK	61
CONNECTICUT	18	NORTH CAROLINA	44
DELAWARE	1	NORTH DAKOTA	1
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	6	OHIO	50
FLORIDA	61	OKLAHOMA	26
GEORGIA	212	OREGON	12
HAWAII	2	PENNSYLVANIA	48
IDAHO	6	RHODE ISLAND	3
ILLINOIS	73	SOUTH CAROLINA	13
INDIANA	25	SOUTH DAKOTA	4
IOWA	13	TENNESSEE	11
KANSAS	19	TEXAS	63
KENTUCKY	16	UTAH	11
LOUISIANA	7	VIRGINIA	55
MAINE	3	WASHINGTON	15
MARYLAND	25	WEST VIRGINIA	6
MASSACHUSETTS	100	WISCONSIN	15
MICHIGAN	26	WYOMING	2
MINNESOTA	64		
MISSISSIPPI	8	CANADA	1
MISSOURI	28		
MONTANA	6		
		TOTAL	1590

Attachment 2

MEMBERSHIP COUNT BY CHAPTER AND GEOGRAPHIC AREA

CHAPTER NAME	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	78 MEMBERSHIP	REGION	CHAPTER PRESIDENT
Greater Boston	Boston, MA	16	New England	Helinda Pesce, 22 Greenwood St., Melrose, MA
Lowell	Lowell, MA area	28	New England	Mary R. Galotta, 117 Pine St, Lowell, MA 01851
New Bedford		12	New England	
Patriots	Chicopee, MA area	24	New England	Juanita Jennings, 41 Riverview Pl, Chicopee, MA 01013
Stamford	Stamford, CT area	5	New England	
Azalea	Norfolk, VA	3	Mid-Atlantic	Hildy McCarroll, 4112 Ridgefield Dr, Norfolk, VA 23516
Greater Pittsburg	Pittsburg, PA area	11	Mid-Atlantic	
Monmouth	Bedford, NJ area	21	Mid-Atlantic	Lorraine Oonk, 483 E. Road, Bedford, NJ 07718
New York City	New York, NY	50	Mid-Atlantic	Larue Yessen, 1099 E 51st St, Brooklyn, NY 11234
Philadelphia	Philadelphia, PA area	16	Mid-Atlantic	
Potomac Area	Washington, DC area	31	Mid-Atlantic	Rose E. Lee, 540 N Lombardy St, Arlington, VA 22203
Holly Bush	Vineland, NJ area	15	Mid-Atlantic	Joanne Danna, 113 W Oxford St, Vineland, NJ 08360
Albany	Albany, GA	26	Southeast	Edith Oliver, 419 Partridge Dr, Albany, GA 31707
Atlanta	Atlanta, GA area	25	Southeast	Christine Shaw, 1384 W Peachtree ST NW, Atlanta, GA 30309
Birmingham	Birmingham, AL area	13	Southeast	Hazel Dunn, 708 81st Pl S, Birmingham, AL 35206
Chattahoochee Vly	Columbus, GA	117	Southeast	Donna Butner, 2515 Walker St, Columbus, GA 31903
Columbus	Columbus, GA	20	Southeast	Thelma Curry, 1525 18th St., Columbus, GA 31901
Dogwood	Atlanta, GA area	19	Southeast	Dot Bourdage, 15B Lambeth Cir, Ellenwood, GA 30049
Orange Blossom	Orlando, FL	11	Southeast	Marie B Palmer, PO Box 5636, Orlando, FL 32805
Tar Heel	Fayetteville, NC	29	Southeast	Lucille Lopez, 5005 Birch Rd, Fayetteville, NC 28304
Wiregrass	Enterprise, AL	19	Southeast	Angela Mooney, 114 Pinehurst Ave, Enterprise, AL 36030
Chicago	Chicago, IL	48	Midwest	Marie Leadman, 130 S Euclid Ave, Oak Park, IL 60301
Toledo	Toledo, OH area	18	Midwest	Ruth Brown, 4835 New England Ave #60, Sylvania, OH 43560
Minneapolis	Minneapolis, MN	56	North Central	Doris Van Campen, 6920 Dawson Ln, Edina, MN 55435
Omaha	Omaha, NB area	14	North Central	Paula Muth, 1006 Somerset Dr, Bellevue, NB 68005
Air Capitol		11	South Central	
Alamo	San Antonio, TX	20	South Central	Ingrid Stewart, 138 Devonshire Dr, San Antonio, TX 78209
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma City, OK	23	South Central	Frances Brock, 5013 N Miller, Oklahoma City, OK 73112
St. Louis	St. Louis, MO	22	South Central	Thelma Ramey, 6003 Dewey Ave, St Louis, MO 63116
Colorado Springs	Colorado Spgs, CO	28	Southwest	Maxine Silceting, 3750 N Cascade, Colorado Springs, CO, 80907
Denver	Denver, CO	129	Southwest	Stella Burket, 1025 Jamaica Ct, Aurora, CO 80010
Phoenix	Phoenix, AZ	1	Southeast	Mary Gayle Murphy, 11843 N 29th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85029

Attachment 3

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.

Excerpts from Members
Letters to Officers - 1975 Survey Comments

Gloria Haug, San Luis Obispo, CA: "Gold Star Wives of America is the only organization that attempts to keep the widow informed of her rights and privileges."

Isabelle Foster, N. Bellmore, NY: "The GSW newsletter is the best source of information to keep widows uptodate on their benefits."

Mary Hall Dempsey, Lake Park, FL: "I have found that the membership has informed me on many things that I probably would not have been aware of. Various information that I did not know or probably would not have known about came from the Newsletter of the Gold Star Wives of America."

Robbin Kuchcinski, Carmichael, CA: "I appreciate all that you have been doing for all of us widows. I thank the Lord for taking care of me through this means. May God bless you in your work. You are much in need."

Lorna Dultmeier, Silver Lake, KS: "I personally feel the Gold Star Wives have been of great help to me."

Irene M. Coen, Radcliff, KY: "These Newsletters are my only source of information. I feel that this organization is the only friend a serviceman's widow has."

Eugenia Condell, Little Rock, AR: "An 18 year-old widow had need of a friend who understood the meaning of 'war widow'. I listened -- I counseled."

Florence Walton, New York: "There are so many things I would never have found out had I not been a Gold Star Wives member. Even though I have remarried, I still pay my dues and I enjoy reading my Newsletters. There is so much that they tell me that otherwise I couldn't know."

Anna Smith, Hamden, CT: "I look forward to receiving the Newsletter. It has information that is very helpful."

Betty Lindsey, Pickins, SC: "May I please thank all of the Gold Star Wives who are working for us. I have been out of the action, but I try to support you with my contributions when I can. Thank you all very much."

Beatrice Hansel, New York: "Just recently a Gold Star Wife started to work in my company and didn't know anything about the organization. I explained and told her the things she was entitled to. The V.A. had given her the wrong information. She couldn't thank me enough."

Linda Bittner Drozd, Southington, CT: "When I remarried all communication with the V.A. stopped. It was through you, the Gold Star Wives, which I learned I could be reinstated if my husband died."

From East Point, GA: "What so many widows do not know is that Gold Star Wives exists. I have met women who do not know what the organization has done, why they are organized, or anything."

Martha Maxine Gayler, Miami, FL: "When I learned of Gold Star Wives of America, I learned that I had benefits, etc. In thinking back, I do not know what or how I'd have known anything of my benefits and privileges without GSW. Even though I'm a member-at-large, I feel this is a worthwhile organization and should be made available to every widow."

Virginia Ann Wood, Birmingham, AL: "If it had not been for Gold Star Wives I wouldn't have known anything about my veteran's benefits."

Hertha Durgin, Pittsburg, CA: "I enjoy all of the Newsletters very much. A great amount of work is put into it. It's very informative."

Betty M. LaGrone, Daleville, AL: "I am very appreciative of the many benefits my children and I have through the efforts and hard work of Gold Star Wives. I am very glad there is an organization such as ours to belong to."

Marsha Crum, Schaller, IA: "The only information I have is the Newsletters I get from the Gold Star Wives."

Florence Britton, New York: "I have first heard about new benefits or possible legislation through Gold Star Wives."

Helen M. Palmer, Daytona Beach, FL: "After many years of being a veteran's widow, it was not until 1973 that I saw an article in an Orlando newspaper with a feature story on 'Gold Star Wives'. I immediately sent a letter to the member whose name was in the article and asked for further information about this wonderful, sorely needed, and 'disgracefully neglected' organization of women. I never knew it existed."

Thelma L. Lee, South Central Region: "I cannot understand how I've never known of your organization --- I could have really used it 20 years ago. My children are all grown now and I sometimes wonder how I made it. I am happy to have discovered such an organization does exist."

Attachment 4

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 1978-1979

BALANCE ON HAND JUNE 1 1978

\$17140.95

RECEIPTS

Dues Fiscal Year 1978-1979	\$4584.00
Fund Raising	3516.50
Royalties	400.00
Donation	45.08
Disbanded Arizona Chap.	144.31
Returned Check (Lovone)	100.00
	<u>\$8789.89</u>

8789.89

\$25930.84DISBURSEMENTS

Officer and Committee Allowances	\$2772.02
Newsletter	2397.70
Printing	42.34
Telephone Listing (Washington, D.C.)	60.00
Audit of Treasurer's books	25.00
Forum Expense for Potomac Chap.	175.66
Supplies (Diana)	250.00
Dues Women's Forum on Nat'l Security	37.50
Welfare Budget (President)	250.00
Position Bond	24.00
Allowances to Delegates to Forum	600.00
Allowance for Convention mailing	300.00
Convention Hostess Chap. Welfare Project	500.00
National President's gift.	30.00
Open House & Hostess suite	334.80
Flowers	26.25
	<u>\$7825.27</u>

\$7825.27

\$18105.57

Balance in South Colo. Nat'l Bank

Balance in South Colo, Nat'l Bank

Savings Account

2411.85

Balance in Colo. Federal Savings

& Loan Association

9480.44

Balance June 1, 1979 Total cash in Bank & Savings

\$29997.86

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.
BANK RECONCILLATION
FISCAL, YEAR. 1978-1979

Balance per Bank Statement, June 1	\$18105.57
Balance Colo. Federal Savings & Loan Association, June 1 1979	\$9480.44
Balance South Colo. National Bank Savings Account June 1. 1979	<u>\$2411.85</u>
Total cash in bank & savings accounts	<u>\$29997.86</u>

Cobowado Federal Savings & Loan Association, Denver Colorado.

Balance June 1 1978	\$8883.87	
Dividend Certificate #21191	<u>596.57</u>	
		\$9480.44

South Colorado National Bank
Denver, Colorado

Balance June 1 1978	\$2294.96	
Interest	<u>116.89</u>	
		<u>\$2411.85</u>
Total Savings Accounts June 1 1979		<u>\$11892.29</u>

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.
FISCAL YEAR 1978-1979

This report has been prepared from a review of all records at hand in accordance with standard accepted accounting principles, and the books of record are kept according to a standard accepted double-entry bookkeeping system with a file system of members for cross-checking and balancing.

Marian E. Bailey

Attachment 5

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.

Synopsis of Reported Activities for 1977-78

Participation with Other Service & Civic Organizations:

Memorial Day Association Activities, Minneapolis, MN
 Avenue of Flags, Ft. Snelling, MN
 Memorial Day Services, Jefferson Memorial Barracks, MO
 Memorial Day Services, Ft. Logan Cemetery, Denver, CO
 Gold Star Wives Avenue of Flags, Ft. Benning, GA
 Veterans Council Thank-You Veterans Day, Columbus, GA
 Memorial Day Services, Parkhill Cemetery, Columbus, GA
 National Veterans Day, Birmingham, AL
 Memorial Day Services, Veterans Council, Orlando, FL
 Fund-Raising Telethon KTCA-TV Educational Channel, Minneapolis, MN
 Memorial & Veterans Day Services, Norfolk, VA
 Memorial Day Services, Vineland, NJ
 Memorial & Veterans Day Activities, Bedford, NJ
 Pearl Harbor Day Memorial, New York City
 Memorial & Veterans Day Activities, New York City
 Memorial & Veterans Day Activities, Arlington National Cemetery
 Memorial Day Services, Fenway, Boston, MA
 Memorial Day Parades, Lowell & Chelmsford, MA
 Patton Memorial Ceremony, Lowell, MA
 Jerry Lewis M. D. Telethon, MA
 Memorial Day Services, Toledo, OH
 Veterans Day Parade, Toledo, OH
 Lucas County Ohio Memorial Association Flag Project
 Mayor's Commission, Columbus, GA
 League of Women Voters, Minneapolis, MN
 Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, PA

Volunteer Service & Donations:

New York Veterans Administration Hospital, New York City
 Radar Army Clinic, Ft. Myer, VA
 Hines VA Hospital, Maywood, IL
 Northampton VA Hospital, Northampton, MA
 Brooke Army Medical Center, Ft. Sam Houston, TX
 130th Station Hospital, Heidelberg, Germany
 Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland AFB, TX
 Tinker AFB, Midwest City, OK
 Fitzsimmons General Hospital, Denver, CO
 Cochran Hospital, St. Louis, MO
 Tuskegee Veterans Home, Tuskegee, AL
 Navy Dispensary, Georgia Veterans Nursing Home, Dublin, GA
 Atlanta VA Hospital, Atlanta, GA
 Martin Army Hospital, Ft. Benning, GA
 Ft. McPherson Army Hospital, GA
 Milledgeville VA Hospital, GA
 Womack Army Hospital, Ft. Bragg, NC
 Ft. Snelling VA Hospital, Minneapolis, MN
 Sarpy Co. Welfare Dept., Omaha, NE
 Alice Lloyd College Foundation, San Antonio, TX
 Visual Handicapped Association, Denver, CO
 Valley Rescue Mission, Columbus, GA
 Phillips Nursing Home, Orlando, FL
 Osceola Art Association, FL
 New Jersey Memorial Home, Vineland, NJ

Volunteer Service & Donations (continued)

JROTC Scholarship, Springfield, MA High School
 Ohio Soldiers & Sailors Home
 Daybreak Center Day Camp for Retarded Children, Toledo, OH
 Salvation Army, USO, DAV, Norfolk, VA
 Department of Human Resources, San Antonio, TX
 Air Force Village Foundation, San Antonio, TX
 National Asthma Center & Emphysema Association, Denver, CO
 Rocky Mt. Association for Junior Blind, Denver, CO
 Rehabilitation House for Disturbed Youth, Waverly, IA
 Memorial Home for Disabled Soldiers & Sailors, NJ
 Vineland Memorial Home, Vineland, NJ
 Tiny Tim Fund, Vineland, NJ
 Daughters of Penelope, Vineland, NJ
 Speck Home for Boys, Oklahoma City, OK
 Appalachian Camp Fund, San Antonio, TX
 Spina Befeda, Inc., Lowell, MA
 Senior Citizens Home, New York City
 Marion, IN VA Hospital
 Golden Age Nutrition Center, Albany, GA
 Sowega Nursing Home, Albany, GA
 Medic Home Health Center, Norfolk, VA
 Windsor Hill Nursing Home, Oklahoma City, OK
 Sister Kenney Institute, Minneapolis, MN
 Southwest Indian Foundation
 Sowega Youth Home, Albany, GA
 Anchorage Home for Alcoholics, Albany, GA
 Palmyra Nursing Home, Albany, GA
 Seed Drug Program, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
 Methodist Home, Macon, GA
 American Indian Relief
 Vivian Adams Retarded School, Ozark, AL
 Leali State Hospital, Hawaii
 Solicitors for Innumerable Fund Drives throughout country

Attachment 6

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA, INC.

Contributions from National Funds

- a) Funding of the 52 state markers in the Congressional Medal of Honor Grove at Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge in 1969 as a memorial to our husbands.
- b) Annual Welfare Project donation of \$500 to the community of the hostessing Chapter of the National Convention:
 - 1968 - Fitzsimmons Hospital, Denver, CO
 - 1969 - Veterans' Administration Hospital, Atlanta, GA
 - 1970 - Veterans' Administration Hospital, Fort Snelling, MN
(increased to \$1,000 by Minneapolis Chapter)
 - 1971 - Veterans' Administration Hospital, San Diego, CA
 - 1972 - Community Drug Program, Columbus, GA
 - 1973 - Chapel Fund at Jefferson Barracks, MO
 - 1974 - Buttonwood Evergreen Halls (home for the emotionally disturbed) in NJ
 - 1975 - Projects for the Retarded, Orlando, FL
 - 1976 - Comforter of the Afflicted Home for severely handicapped and retarded children, Toledo, OH
 - 1977 - Jeanine Schulz Day School for Handicapped Children, Park Ridge, IL
 - 1978 - Inner-City Neighborhood Project, Hartford, CT
- c) Funds up to \$250 annually allotted to National President for donations in the name of Gold Star Wives of America (a new project voted in 1977):
 - 1977-78 - Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge; Pershing Memorial Museum Development Fund; Plaque designating the Avenue of Flags at Fort Snelling, MN

Attachment 7

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA
VOLUNTARY SERVICE REPORT

COMMUNITY AND HOSPITAL SERVICES

I. COMMUNITY SERVICES

A. Cash Donations and material donations		57,445.95
B. Volunteer Hours (Boy and Girl Scouts, Pink Lady, etc.)	42,532 hours at \$2.65	112,709.80
C. Baby Sitting (Child Care for mothers)	30 hours at \$2.65	79.50
C. Milage	25,058 miles at 20¢	<u>5,011.60</u>
	TOTAL	<u>175,246.85</u>

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II. HOSPITAL - MILITARY AND VA HOSPITALS

A. 10 VA Medical Centers (94 Volunteer Workers) 5 Military Hospitals	2,365 hours	6,267.25
B. Cash Donations (For patient recreation)		272.50
C. Material donations (Gifts and food for patients)		4,650.60
D. Milage to Hospital	7,663 Miles at 20¢	<u>1,532.60</u>
	TOTAL	<u>12,722.95</u>

Attachment 8

GOLD STAR WIVES OF AMERICA
SERVICE OFFERS REPORT

TYPES OF QUESTIONS REFERRED TO SERVICE OFFICER:

House bound Allowance

Home Loans

Compensation Increases

10 Year delinquency

Champus eligibility transferred to Medicare

Applying to Military Bases for I.D. cards

Children Education Benefits

Dependent Parents benefits

Senator BAYH. Thank you very much, Mrs. Chittick. Do either of the other ladies there, Mrs. Knowles or Mrs. Simonfy, care to add a comment to this statement?

Mrs. KNOWLES. All I can say is that several times I've been investigated by military bases. Fortunately, they didn't find any fingerprints.

Senator BAYH. Is it true that your husband was a chaplain?

Mrs. KNOWLES. That's right. He was an Army chaplain.

Senator BAYH. It's rather interesting they would be investigating the widow of a chaplain who had given his life for his country.

Mrs. KNOWLES. They didn't pay any attention to looking through his records or anything like that. But before they would start a chapter at Fort Bragg, and one time I was trying to help a widow and get her membership dues from Shaw Air Force Base, I found that they had called down to Albany to find out just who that Mrs. Knowles was. They couldn't find anything wrong with me, of course. It was interesting to see what lengths that some of the military bases would go to protect the women from another widow.

Senator BAYH. It is hard for people like us, you particularly, and even someone like myself, whom you have been kind enough to incorporate some time ago in this joint effort, it is difficult for us to understand this. On the other hand, I suppose there a number of unscrupulous souls out there that would like to prey on a widow at a time like this. All the more reason, it seems to me, for us to have a legitimate Gold Star Wives organization so that there would be no question about it. I guess we all learn by experiences, whether they are happy or painful. I think I can better sympathize with the camaraderie Gold Star Wives provide after the loss of a spouse than I could have at this time last year. There is just something about that kind of experience that can only be fully appreciated by someone who has had a similar experience. There is none other like it. My heart and my deep gratitude goes out to you and those you represent for the sacrifice that you have made for your country, which is more valuable than gold. But beyond that, to be willing to turn grief and a great personal loss and sacrifice to further service for your country is a mark of a rather unique and exemplary breed of human beings. I'm glad to be counted as one of your principal supporters. We're going to move this legislation. I just have the feeling in the pit of my stomach that we are, and let us proceed.

Mrs. CHITTICK. Mrs. Simonfy has a statement she would like to present.

Mrs. SIMONFY. It should be covered because I'm a little bit different. My husband was not a war casualty: He was line of duty. And incidentally, Senator, I met you a few years ago when you were trekking across Massachusetts and you hit Westover Air Force Base, and you met with about four or five—

Senator BAYH. I remember that experience.

Mrs. SIMONFY. We just started a small chapter there and you were very gracious to move into a little room and talk with us for a while, and I want you to know we really did appreciate it.

I'm the widow of Lt. Col. John M. Simonfy, Jr., a B-52 radar navigator, who was stationed at Westover Air Force Base, Mass. He had 249 combat missions in Vietnam. On January 7, 1971, the day before our son's 6th birthday, my husband substituted on 3 hour's

notice on a flight to certify a new navigator. About 5 hours after takeoff, and 2 hours prior to landing, I was told that my husband's airplane had crashed into Lake Michigan. Three days later the crew was declared dead. The aircraft was not recovered. Neither were the bodies of the crew. Nine widows and seventeen children were listed as survivors. I would like to read a letter written by my husband to our 4-year-old son. This was written February 7, 1969:

Dear Christopher, Sent valentine cards to Sarah and Marty so think it's only right that you get one too. It's hard for a daddy to tell little boys like you how much he loves you, and the words on cards are pretty good, but everybody knows they are canned and that anyone with the price of a card can say the same thing. No, when you really get down to it, daddies don't do a very good job of expressing their love to anyone, but that doesn't mean they don't love, maybe as much as mamas.

We visited some really outstanding American boys during the past week, and I truly hope that when you reach that age, you'll be capable of the same selfless love these boys are. I hope fervently that you won't have to go through what they are to prove it, but I'd sure like to think you're capable of the same thing. None of them would admit to it, of course, but these kids are the backbone of America. I'm going to enclose a picture that I'd like to have your mother put away. It's of us talking with General Abrams, one of the high points of our trip. Guess he likes to spend some time with any crew that comes through, but his schedule just does not permit very much of it.

Isn't it funny how nearly every picture shows my ring? This is in no way intentional, but maybe shows a little bit of your mother is with me always. You be a good boy and remember how your daddy loves you, even if he's clumsy with words. My love always, Daddy.

Christopher replied 10 years later, before attending memorial services: "I want to remember. I want to show how I feel about my father. Sometimes it takes courage to remember."

Gold Star Wives of America helps children speak of their fathers. The children know the eligibility requirements of this one-of-a-kind organization. But this is only one example of how Gold Star Wives of America helps dependent children adjust. We are in a peacetime situation. In a similar peacetime period between Korea and Vietnam, more than 36,000 servicemen died in line of duty. This year alone it is estimated that 750 Air Force men will die. Of this 750, 7 to 8 percent will not be recovered. Of the 750, three-fourths will be married. About 570 women will become suddenly, and shatteringly widows. As Dennis the Menace told his mother, "It's not the dark I'm afraid of. It's what I can't see that scares me."

The new widow has no one to talk with. Why? Because under present circumstances, the widows who preceded her are rendered invisible by the military. She has no idea of what to expect. Usually there is no one to help her in anticipating the future which at this time, at its very best, is bleak.

Gold Star Wives of America, though, can tell her what's in the dark so she can at least have the dimmest idea of what to look for in the dark. Gold Star Wives of America at least tries to take the scare out of what the new widow can't see in the dark. There is a wealth of information to be gained through this organization which also can be used easily as a guideline for active duty forces. A Federal charter would give us the credibility we need. With it we no longer would have to endure the frustration, rejections and even insults that we have been experiencing. Our assistance to new widows and privileges that are her inherent right would no longer be left up to whims or personalities of individual commanders.

A Federal charter would allow us to be an additional resource to the active duty widows. We want to be allowed, yes, even encouraged, to add a new dimension of service given new widows by military casualty assistance personnel. We want to ease the pain and agony. We want to be able to give of ourselves. We care, because we've all been there.

Senator BAYH. Thank you. I think that letter from Christopher's father is a fitting way to close our hearings. We'll do everything we can to see that your efforts, our efforts, are successful.

Mrs. CHITTICK. Senator Bayh, may I take this opportunity to thank all of the representatives from other organizations, and the Veterans' Administration, for appearing on our behalf.

Senator BAYH. We appreciate that, and this is another example of the importance of your mission, your goal, that really there is no rivalry among organizations. This is an effort to try to give citizens who really are in need, the help of a group of other citizens who are uniquely well qualified to provide that service. I share your appreciation for the joint services organization efforts there. That will be helpful.

[Whereupon, at 11:32 a.m., on November 16, 1979, the hearing adjourned.]

APPENDIX

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
Washington, D.C., November 15, 1979.

HON. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY: This letter is in reference to S. 1179, a bill introduced on May 17 of this year by Senator Birch Bayh, which has as its purpose the incorporation of the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.

On behalf of the 635,000 members of the Disabled American Veterans, I wish to inform you that our organization supports congressional passage of S. 1179.

Formed shortly after World War II by the widows of servicemen who lost their lives in that great conflict, the Gold Star Wives of America has since opened its ranks to receive for membership: (1) the widow of any serviceman who died while on active military service in our nation's Armed Forces, or (2) the widow of a former serviceman whose death was related to service incurred wound, injury or disease.

Though it is true that those eligible for membership in the Gold Star Wives of America also have membership eligibility in other service organizations and/or their auxiliary units, we believe the granting of a Federal charter to such a unique category of women to be unquestionably meritorious.

In addition to stimulating organizational growth and viability, Federal incorporation would greatly enhance the ability of the Gold Star Wives of America to carry on their current programs of charitable, educational and patriotic purpose. This organization, I am sure, carries the potential to make valuable contributions to American society as a whole, in addition to the many services it will offer to its present and future membership.

The DAV urges the speedy and favorable consideration of S. 1179 by you and your colleagues of the Judiciary Committee. I also respectfully request that this letter be incorporated as a part of the committee's hearing record on this most important legislation.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL L. THOMPSON,
National Commander.

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