

fundamental issues facing our Nation. Our report challenged not just Government but our schools, our businesses and our parents to take the steps needed to secure a prosperous future for our Nation. We laid out a plan of action to get our fiscal house in order; to raise our level of national savings and our level of public and private investment in both physical and human capital; and to improve the way Washington works.

It is with great pleasure that I end my Senate career with a public thank you to a man who has contributed so much to U.S. national security and foreign policy and to me personally, David Abshire. I wish David, his wife Carolyn, and his family all the best.●

#### GRAZING OPERATIONS IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

● Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise to express my desire to work with the National Park Service to address the issue of open space in the Teton Valley and its interrelationship with grazing in Grand Teton National Park. Since establishment of the park in 1950, a limited number of local ranchers, who had grazing privileges within the boundaries of Grand Teton Park before its establishment, have been allowed to continue to graze within the area. These grazing permits were given for the life of the designated heirs of the permit holders who were local ranchers that required the summer range to maintain their ranches.

This arrangement has not only benefitted the ranch families involved, but helped support the ecology in the park and preserved open space in Jackson Valley for visitors to this unique region. Unfortunately, in the past few years, both of the designed heirs to these grazing permits have died. Although both families have expressed their interest in continuing to ranch in Jackson Valley, the Park Service may be forced to terminate these grazing permits unless a reasonable solution can be found. Without the summer range available in the park, these ranchers may be forced to end their operations and sell their ranches. If these ranches are sold, they would be immediately subdivided and developed and the open space provided by these areas would be gone forever.

It is an imperative environmental issue that we work to ensure that open space is preserved in and around Grand Teton National Park. This region is truly unique and it is vital for both the wildlife living in and around the park and the environment throughout the region that open space is protected. Unless the ranchers are allowed to continue grazing in the park, the region will be threatened with development that will harm the wildlife and the ecology in and around the park.

In the coming months, the Wyoming congressional delegation plans to work with the National Park Service, the ranch families, the environmental

community and local citizens to develop a solution to this situation. By working together, I am hopeful we can continue to protect the open space in this magnificent region and continue an activity that has been monitored and managed by the Park Service for over 45 years. Make no mistake about it, ending grazing operations in Grand Teton National Park will be harmful to park resources, wildlife in the area and will destroy open space for visitors to this outstanding region. I look forward to working with the National Park Service in the coming months to address this critical matter.●

#### MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an issue that has troubled me greatly over the years and has recently become an even greater problem as our Nation strives toward a balanced budget. This is the issue of the quality of life of our service men and women.

As a former enlisted sailor in the Navy, a commissioned officer in the Marine Corps, and Under Secretary and Secretary of the Navy, I have a particular empathy for our men and women in uniform. These men and women make sacrifices every day, throughout their careers, in defense of our nation. However, the pay and benefits that they receive, which in some cases are woefully inadequate, are constantly under attack by people and organizations that are too focused on the bottom-line and not on the morale and readiness of our Armed Forces. It is for this reason that I, as a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, sleep with one eye open in order to protect the benefits which our service members and veterans have earned through loyal and patriotic service to our Nation.

I have worked hard, together with my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, to provide increased funding to improve the quality of life of our Armed Forces. In particular, we have been concerned about the lack of adequate funding for the maintenance of military housing. Many of our service members and their families are forced to live in substandard housing. In testimony before the Armed Services Committee this year, Department of Defense officials testified that a full 80 percent of military housing falls below Department of Defense standards. The result of years of diverting maintenance funds to other requirements is military housing units with leaky plumbing, flaking paint and broken appliances. Our service members deserve better!

That is why I was so concerned to see two articles in the most recent editions of the Navy and Army Times which describe further inequities for our service members in the area of military housing. I ask unanimous consent that these articles be printed in the RECORD.

The first article concerns a report by the General Accounting Office, dated

September 17, 1996, which recommends that military families should begin paying rent for living in Government quarters. The report suggests that the rental payments are not primarily to raise money from military families, but to treat all service members equally whether they live on or off base. It is unfortunate that GAO's recommended solution to fix what they perceive to be an inequity is to raise the out-of-pocket expenses of the families living on-base, rather than increase the housing allowances to an adequate level for those living off-base. GAO's first response is to cut benefits to our Armed Forces.

I was pleased to see that the Pentagon opposes this idea. I will work with my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee to ensure that this GAO recommendation is not adopted.

The second article concerns a recent ruling by the General Accounting Office that a service member who is required to move because of renovation or construction of their base housing, is not eligible for a dislocation allowance to cover the expenses of that move. This is an issue of basic fairness. How can the Government, in good conscience, order a military service member to uproot and move his or her family and all of their possessions, but not pay the expenses of that move? This is another example of the constant attack on the benefits of our service members.

I will work with the Pentagon to try to find a solution to this problem. It is my understanding that the Pentagon had been paying service members a dislocation allowance for these moves prior to the GAO ruling. I am hopeful that a quick solution can be found so that service members will not have to bear the cost of these moves. If necessary, I will introduce legislation next year to correct this unfair practice.

Mr. President, it is time that we end this continuous assault on the quality of life of our Armed Forces. It is a question of fairness and respect for those that so selflessly serve our nation and defend the freedom that we all hold dear.

[From the Navy Times, Sept. 30, 1996]

PAYING RENT ON BASE? GOVERNMENT REPORT SAYS ALL SHOULD PAY

(By Rick Maze)

Military families should begin paying a modest rent for living in government quarters, according to a new congressional report.

The rental payments are being suggested not so much to raise money from military families as they are to treat all service members equally, whether they live on or off base.

But the underlying reason is that the rental payments would eliminate the attraction of living on base for many military members, and that would result in huge savings for the government.

The "rent" would vary by rank and location, but would average \$2,016 a year, according to the Sept. 17 General Accounting Office report. That is the same amount as the average out-of-pocket cost for service members with families living off base, whose housing

allowances are set to fall roughly 18.5 percent short of covering the full cost of lodging and utilities.

#### NO RENT CHECKS JUST YET

Rent checks won't be required any time soon, because the report was delivered to the Senate Armed Services personnel subcommittee just weeks before Congress was scheduled to adjourn.

But the recommendations will play a part in the debate next year over both the planned overhaul of the military housing allowances and the Pentagon's continued push to improve housing conditions, both on and off base.

In recommending the on-base rents, auditors from the bipartisan congressional office said it isn't fair that people living off base must pay out of their own pockets for housing while people in the government quarters live rent-free.

But the real reason the bipartisan office is pushing the idea is the belief that charging even a modest amount for living in military family housing could save money. That's because rent-free living is one of the major attractions of living in government quarters.

If there is no financial difference between living on or off base, the government might be able to reduce its housing inventory. That would save money, the report says, because it costs the government an average of \$4,957 more per year for each family living in government quarters than it costs to subsidize families living off base.

#### DOD SAYS "NO"

The Defense Department opposes the idea, saying the rent would have "potentially severe consequences for military retention and readiness, a sit would equate to a reduction in benefits for those personnel."

In an official response included in the GAO report, defense officials said the "only viable alternative" is increasing housing allowances to eliminate unreimbursed expenses for those living off base.

But that is not likely.

It would take about \$1.4 billion a year to raise housing allowances by enough to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for people living off base, defense officials said. It would cost \$322 million a year to reduce average unreimbursed housing expenses to 15 percent, the goal of the current allowance system.

The point of the GAO report is that the services could and should rely more on the private sector to provide housing and eliminate some family quarters. The one exception, according to the report, is that more on-base housing should be dedicated to junior enlisted members with families, who have the greatest difficulty finding affordable off-base housing.

Defense officials said they will leave decisions about who gets on-base housing to installation commanders. In some cases, junior enlisted personnel get priority. But in most places, career service members whom the services want to retain are given on-base housing ahead of junior members, defense officials said.

There are some locations with more on-base housing than necessary, defense officials said.

Construction plans have been modified to prevent overbuilding, but any existing housing that can be economically maintained will be kept open.

[From the Army Times, Sept. 30, 1996]

MILITARY WON'T PAY FOR YOU TO MOVE OUT OF WAY—YOU'LL PICK UP TAB FOR RELOCATING FOR BASE HOUSING RENOVATIONS

(By Andrew Compant)

The good news: The military is fixing the housing at your base.

The bad news: Although the military is forcing you to move because of renovations or new construction, it cannot pay you a dislocation allowance to cover your expenses, the General Accounting Office ruled Sept. 11.

The dislocation allowance, designed to help military people offset the costs of forced moves, is only intended for use when a move is required because of a permanent change of station or an evacuation, the GAO Comptroller General's Office said in its decision.

The military can use other funds, such as money designated for operations and maintenance, to help people pay for "mandatory" items, such as charges for hooking up the telephone and other utilities, the ruling said. But even that money cannot be used to help offset the cost of "personal" items, such as drapes or rugs.

#### COULDN'T AFFORD "ANYTHING DECENT"

The GAO ruling came in a case involving Air Force SSgt. Daren Pierce at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, after the financial services officer for the base's 366th Comptroller Squadron asked for a decision on the issue.

Pierce said he was one of many people to complain when they found out they couldn't get the dislocation allowance, which is a lump-sum payment equal to a person's basic allowance for quarters for two months. He spent \$150 to \$200 for blinds at his previous home, and though he could scarcely afford it, he spent \$120 on the cheapest blinds he could find for the new home.

Pierce said he would have been satisfied with a partial dislocation allowance. "I'm not out there to get a bunch of money. But I feel we should be reimbursed for what our expenses were," he said, adding that he believes the housing construction is necessary for people at the base.

Mountain Home is replacing 52 of 612 1950s-era family housing units with two-bedroom homes for junior enlisted people, a project that began in mid-February. Eventually all units will be replaced, said Senior Airman Sonja Whittington, a base spokeswoman.

The base left some homes empty in anticipation of the reconstruction, and it met with the other families in "town meetings" to answer questions about their impending moves. The base paid for movers and expenses such as telephone and cable television connections.

Initially the base also paid the dislocation allowance to 12 of the families, Whittington said. But within a week the base was told by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service that it had made a mistake, according to Whittington and the GAO summary of the case, and the base had to ask the families to give the money back.

"It's unfortunate there was an error, but getting brand new housing is a nice thing," Whittington said. "We tried to make it as easy on our people as we could within the guidelines."

It is not known how often complaints about unreimbursed expenses arise. Richard Hentz, in charge of programming for Army family housing construction projects, said the issue never has been raised with him.

At Fort Knox, Ky., where housing renovations are scheduled to begin Nov. 1, officials stopped moving people into homes that are to be renovated. But even still, more than 400 families are being affected, said Peter Andrysiak, chief of the base's housing division.●

#### MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA FIREFIGHTERS

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to

recognize the exceptional dedication of Michigan's Upper Peninsula firefighters. These courageous men and women joined forces with firefighters from across the Nation to battle this summer's rampant fires in the West. Countless acres of this country's precious wilderness, as well as untold millions in public and private property, have been saved due to their selfless efforts. Each of these individuals served their State and country proudly, whether administratively or on the front lines. These brave professionals stand ready to protect this country in times of natural disaster and for this, they have earned our respect and admiration.

I am privileged to recognize the following Upper Peninsula residents for their work fighting fires in the Western United States:

Kevin Doran, Bill Bowman, Sandy Pilon, Orlando Sutton, Mike Miller, Don Howlett, Dave Worel, Jane Wright, Roger Humpala, Duane Puro, Judy Moore, Ed Wenger, Jenny Piggott, Terry Papple, Terry Arnold, Paul Pedersen, Don Mikel, Ralph Colegrove, Jerry Terrain, Chuck Oslund, Phil Kinney, Vern St. John, Kevin Pine, Doug Heym, Ty Teets, Joan Charlobois, Jon Reattoir, Alex Jahn, Nathan McNett, Mary Clement, Les Henry, Ruth Ann Trudell, Tom Vanlerberghe, Kerry Doyle, Jon Luepke, Louise Congdon, Rick Litzner, Todd Scotegraaf, John Pavkovich, John Ochman, Lori Keen, Eric Johnston, Dennis Neitzke, Lee Ann Loupe, Rodney Mobley, Ollie Todd, Sharon Makosky, Ernest Hart, Cecilia Seesholtz, Jim Wethy.

Dave Worel, Karen Waalen, Jeff Stromberg, Allen Duszynski, Mike Lanasa, Brenda Madden, Jim Flores, Al Saberniak, Marvin June, Joe Carrick, John Niskanen, Bret Niemi, John Worden, Nichols Wall, Paul Dashner, Pamela Harmann, Paul Cichy, Brunkdoreen Baron, David Trewartha, Mike Syracuse, Tom Strietzel, Aaron Pouylous, Larry Velmar, Jim Dehut, Eric Green Pete Allen, Jason Allen, Eugene Loonsfood, Charles Gauthier, Nathan Avedisian, Robert Pairolero, John Strasser, Bill Genschow, Allen Mackey, John Holmes, Paul Blettner, E.B. Fitzpatrick, Don Palmer, Cindy Miller.

John Kempson, Ben Mireki, Nathan Lainonen, Loren Kariainen, Joanne Thurber, Bobby Joe, Justin Borseth, Allan Wacker, Dan Ryskey, Greg Dove, Mike Dakota, John Lee, Paul Daniels, Brian Blettner, John Tanner, Dave Pickford, Gerry Gustafson, Mary Rasmussen, Lee Rouse, Dale Gordon, Jake Maki, Matt Lindquist, Deb Korich, Bill Reynolds, Jean Perkins, Wayne Petterson, Kay Gibson, Floyd Meyer, Phil Doepke, Steve Chad, Greg Rozeboom, Rob Smith, Robert Garrison Jr., Heather Wettenkamp, Gayle Sironen, Sharon Brunk, Cliff Johns, Robert Wagner, Del Platzke, Jerry Hoffman, Linda Kramer, Chuck Mowitt, Mark Adamson, Shawn Green,