end of the bargain. They are now realizing that these were nothing more than empty promises.

Those who served in the military did not let their country down in its time of need and we should not let military retirees down in theirs. It's time military retirees get what was promised to them and that's why I am introducing this legislation.

THE FILIPINO VETERANS SSI EXTENSION ACT, H.R. 26

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 26, the Filipino Veterans SSI Extension Act.

For the last several Congresses, I have introduced the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, a bill which would provide full veterans benefits to those veterans of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines.

Although hearings were held on this bill last year, the prospect of legislative action on a comprehensive benefit package for Filipino veterans appears unlikely. Therefore, I am offering this measure in part to provide some relief for those Filipino veterans residing in the United States who currently receive supplemental security income benefits.

Under current law, individuals who receive SSI benefits must relinquish those benefits if they choose to leave the country. This bill would permit those who were members of the Filipino Commonwealth Army and recognized guerilla units during World War II to continue to receive SSI benefits if they elect to return to the Philippines.

These benefits would be reduced by 50 percent if the individual veteran returned to the Philippines, to reflect the lower cost of living and per capita income of that nation.

It is estimated that several thousand veterans would be affected, many of whom are financially unable to petition their families to immigrate to the United States. Should this bill be adopted, these veterans would be able to return to their families in the Philippines while bringing a decent income with them.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this worthwhile measure.

H.R. 26

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROVISION OF REDUCED SSI BENEFIT TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHO PROVIDED SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING WORLD WAR II AFTER THEY MOVE BACK TO THE PHILIPPINES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections 1611(b), 1611(f)(1), and 1614(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act—

(1) the eligibility of a qualified individual for benefits under the supplemental security income program under title XVI of such Act shall not terminate by reason of a change in the place of residence of the individual to the Philippines; and

(2) the benefits payable to the individual under such program shall be reduced by 50 percent for so long as the place of residence of the individual is in the Philippines.

(b) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In subsection (a), the term ''qualified individual'' means an individual who—

(1) as of January 1, 1990, was eligible for benefits under the supplemental security income program under title XVI of the Social Security Act; and

(2) before August 15, 1945, served in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including among such military forces organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent military authority in the Army of the United States.

HONORING MY FRIEND, BASEBALL LEGEND NOLAN RYAN, ON HIS ELECTION TO THE HALL OF FAME

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor to my long-time friend, Nolan Ryan, on the announcement of his election to the Baseball Hall of Fame. I've known Nolan for many years, and I knew him as a kind, generous man who seeks to do what is right and just. It seems there are so few heroes for kids today, especially in athletics, but I can sincerely commend Nolan Ryan as a true hero of our times, a role-model for our youth, and a man worthy of honor and respect.

Nolan was born in Refugio, Texas, a historic town in my congressional district, but he was destined for the national stage. His successful career spanned 27 years, taking him from rural Texas to the dug-outs of the New York Mets, the California Angels, the Houston Astros and the Texas Rangers. He pitched a record seven no-hitter games, but his real fame comes from having pitched 5,714 strikeouts.

Nolan told newspaper reporters yesterday that he never viewed himself as a ''hall of famer.'' For once, I have to disagree with my friend. He is Hall of Fame material not only for his prowess on the field, but for his strong character and unwavering dedication to his family, his friends, his beliefs, and his God.

I trust all my colleagues join me in congratulating Nolan Ryan.

GOOD ADVICE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION CEREMONIES

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member strongly commends to the attention of his colleagues an editorial found in the January 5, 1999, edition of the Omaha World Herald entitled, ''Discreet State of Union Would Do.'' The editorial appropriately points out that during recent years during a president's State of the Union address ''supporters bounce up and down giving standing ovations in response to choreographed rhetorical flourishes. His opponents, also playing to the cameras, signify displeasure with stony silence. Or they disproportionately applaud such presidential lines as, ''We must do better,'' when ''better'' refers to a policy that the opponents support.''

Indeed, it should be obvious to Members of Congress and to much of the American public that the atmosphere now attending the delivery of a State of the Union address has become high political theater which does not serve the reputation of the Congress well; nor does it reassure the American public that the Congress or the President are seriously attempting to work together to address the problems and opportunities facing our nation. It has degenerated into the kind of exaggerated conduct that one would expect to find in an old-fashioned melodrama. It is time for a change, and the editorial makes some relevant points and suggestions about directions for such changes. This Member urges his colleagues and especially leaders of the Congress to work with the President and his successor to make appropriate modifications in the manner in which the State of the Union is presented to the Congress.

DISCREET STATE OF UNION WOULD DO

Some U.S. senators, including Democrats Robert Torricelli of New Jersey and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, say it would be inappropriate for President Clinton to appear before a joint session of Congress to report on the State of the Union while his impeachment trial is pending. It would not be a national tragedy if Clinton listened to them.

Nothing in the Constitution says a president must deliver a prime-time, televised speech from the House of Representatives every year. It says only that the president ''shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.'' George Washington and John Adams addressed joint sessions of Congress in person. Thomas Jefferson discontinued the practice. He said a personal appearance was too monarchical a ceremony for the leader of a democratic republic.

Written State of the Union addresses—often not much more than a collection of bureaucratic reports from the departments of the executive branch—were delivered to Congress until 1913, when Woodrow Wilson resurrected the tradition of a presidential speech. Wilson said he wanted to show ''that the president of the United States is a person, not a mere department of the government hailing Congress from some isolated island of jealous power, sending messages, not speaking naturally with his own voice—that he is a human being trying to cooperate with other human beings in a common service.''

It's hard to quibble with that proposition. But the development of television since Wilson's time has put the State of the Union address in a different light. The president is now one of the most visible persons in the world. And the event Wilson described as a chance for the president to speak naturally with his own voice about common service to the people has devolved into a glitzy production heavy on style and light on substance.

In the modern television age, the formula is the same regardless of which party holds the White House. As senators and representatives look on in the House chamber, the president's entrance is preceded by processions of Cabinet members and Supreme Court justices. Members of the president's