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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS
STATE ARMORY BOARD
PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

DAV 71st ANNUAL CONVENTION

Thank you, Commander Wall and Adjutant Neeves....

**It is truly an honor to be before you and your membership
at your 71st annual convention of the Disabled American
Veterans/Department of Pennsylvania.**

(PAUSE)

**As most of you are aware, the new movie "Pearl
Harbor" was just released in the theaters over the Memorial
Day weekend. I myself have not had the opportunity to see
it yet, but, as a former teacher of *educator* ~~history/social studies~~
and a strong supporter of American history preservation
I will indeed see this movie later this month.**

Nonetheless, it was intriguing to read in the newspaper that the producers of this movie spent multiple millions of dollars on the promotion of this movie, which set a record as being the second largest box office opening ever. Not too far behind this in the record book is the now epic movie

“Saving Private Ryan.”

The rich history that is a part of WWII films of this nature is indeed awe-inspiring; however, I sometimes wonder if it is only through “sensationalized” movies that our younger generation truly begins to grasp the infinite hardships that our military veterans encountered in various wars on their generation’s behalf.

Yes, indeed patriotic fervor can be heightened by films such as “Pearl Harbor,” “Saving Private Ryan,” “Platoon” and countless others However, you, the

members of the Disabled American Veterans organization, are fully aware that the remembrance of our nation's veterans should be experienced daily and not in two-hour increments on occasional visits to the movie theaters.

The Pennsylvania General Assembly, through Representative Allan Egolf's HB 592, is fully aware of this as well. That is why I will be bringing this bill up for a committee vote prior to our summer recess. This legislation would require all schools to have a United States flag in "each" classroom, and require the "daily" recital of the Pledge of Allegiance or our National Anthem at the beginning of each school day. The purpose of this legislation is to put that "patriotic fervor" back on track, thereby affording our younger generation the opportunity to reflect

daily on those individuals who served to protect the freedoms associated with our national symbol.

As well, you may have heard of the recent passage of HB 328 into law. This new law created a second-degree misdemeanor penalty for persons who sell or attempt to sell veterans grave markers at flea markets, antique shops or even on eBay. Through public service announcements and a mass-media campaign on this bill's passage, it is our hope that we will have first curbed the theft of these markers from veterans graves, and second we hope that we have effectively reminded the community that these veterans markers are more than merely tangible objects.

(PAUSE)

They serve as a sacred honorarium to those men and women who have proudly served their country in her time of need.

Along the same lines of remembrance, the House of Representatives unanimously ^{passed} pass HB 186 this past Tuesday. This legislation would enable schools to adopt “Operation Recognition” which would create a program where WWII veterans, who did not graduate from high school due to wartime service, would receive their diplomas.

Programs such as this one will afford schools the ability to have high school seniors participate in these programs thereby exposing them to this generation of veterans and allowing them to chronicle the many untold stories of the participants in this piece of history.

(PAUSE)

Firsthand encounters such as these will no doubt have more of an everlasting effect on these young individuals than all of the war movies put together.

As Majority chairman of the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I am honored to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with each and every one of you in our mission to make sure our younger generation remembers the important endeavors of the veterans of this great nation. As well, I was honored to prime-sponsor an amendment to this year's state budget, which appropriates \$250,000 to the DAV transportation network. It is my hope that this line-item will be adopted as we vote on the state budget next week and I will work hard to express the importance of this transportation program to my legislative colleagues.

In closing, I would like to once again thank Commander Wall and Adjutant Neeves for inviting me here today to be a part of your opening ceremonies. It is always nice to

observe firsthand the good work that your organization puts forth on behalf of the veteran community. As well, I would like to thank them, and ^{your} their Legislative Affairs Director, Tom McDole, for all of the assistance that they routinely afford my committee and staff.

I wish you Godspeed on your never-ending membership drive, and I hope that everyone has a safe and pleasant time at your 71st Annual State Convention here in our State Capital. *Area.*

Lastly, I would like to present Commander Wall with this House Citation which honors him for his steadfast leadership of the DAV this past year.

(PRESENT OR HAND HIM CITATION)