

May 11, 1979

LR 86

yet still in keeping with the resolutions that were passed in other states. Let me say that I personally felt that the war in Vietnam was a mistake for this nation. One, it was a repudiation of our belief in the domino theory of military involvement. It was also a repudiation of the United States military power and ability to win any war anywhere for any reason. As Senator DeCamp said, I think it is a learning experience for the American people and I would hope it would be viewed as such. We learned much from the Vietnam War. We learned that not only should this nation not be the peacekeeping, should not be the law enforcement or peacekeeping nation that is involved all throughout the world but we must look more critically at our involvement and analyze that involvement as to its basic strategic needs and values for our nation. I was opposed to the Vietnam War before I went to war and I was opposed after I came back. I think the mistakes this country made during that period of time were horrendous and continual. I would pay special criticism to certain peoples but I think that this resolution is intended not to be critical but intended instead to show or to bring forth the facts that the American GIs who served in that war served at their nation's request and that it was the leaders of this country that made that decision to fight in that war and it was America's young people who fought bravely, as bravely as they could, in what many felt was not a legitimate or a proper or a reasonable conflict. But it should not create any bias or negative feelings on behalf of those soldiers that did serve because it was in fact their nation that sent them and they responded to their nation as they should have responded to their nation. This war, this war has left scars but it has not scarred, it has not scarred these GIs anymore than it has scarred in other wars, in previous wars, it scarred other GIs. The Vietnam veteran is not inferior militarily. He is not inferior mentally. He is not inferior in any way. The difference in this war was that we lost. We lost because we shouldn't have been involved in it in the first place, and as Senator Chambers has said, this war deterred this country from making some tremendous economic and social strides during the mid-60's. I was opposed to the war in 1965 because it deterred us from what I thought was a very valuable social program at home and that program was called the Great Society. We learned from this war and the experiences coming from the '60s that we cannot afford to have guns and butter, and if we make those decisions, we have to make those decisions recognizing what our priorities, our national priorities, should be. We made the wrong national priorities. We fought in Vietnam for pride, for pride, for military pride, and we lost. It should explain some things

5181