

Neither your service nor mine entitles us to new benefits

Gene Wright, thank you for your 22 years of military service. However, you are not alone in your oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

My father's a World War II veteran; my brother's an 18-year National Guard veteran; and I served in the Navy. Serving in the military does not entitle us to any additional rights or benefits beyond those we signed up for.

If you break into my house and steal \$1,000 to buy prescription drugs, we call that theft. If you lobby Congress to pass a drug bill which taxes me \$1,000 to pay for your prescription drugs, we call that legislation. What is the difference? Either way, you are trying to get something without paying for it.

Social Security and Medicare unfunded liabilities, plus the national debt, total \$22.5 trillion. This is \$150,000 per worker. In 2001, interest paid on the national debt was \$359.5 billion, or 36 percent of income taxes. This year the worker's share of the liability will increase by \$10,125 plus a potential \$400 billion deficit this year, adding \$2,667 more.

For more than 66 years, we have let emotions run our budget. It is time to just say no to government handouts. We cannot afford prescription drugs for seniors!

William Larsen