

Veterans may receive increased benefits

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of The Emerald

Vietnam veterans may see a 15 percent increase in their educational benefits in September if a proposed amendment passes Congress.

Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., says he will propose an amendment to the G.I. Bill Amendments Act of 1979, S. 870, to attach a 15 percent cost-of-living increase to veterans' monthly educational allowances. If passed the increase will be the first in three years.

"My proposal is a very modest approach to correcting a gross inequality," Cranston says, adding that Congress would have to raise benefits by more than 30 percent to offset the effects of inflation since the last increase in 1977.

Dan Perry, special assistant to Cranston, says the bill may come before the Senate for a vote soon after Congress convenes on Jan. 22. If approved the increase would go into effect in time for the 1980-81 academic year.

The proposal would raise the

monthly allowance for a veteran with no dependents from \$311 to \$358 and from \$422 to \$486 a month for a married veteran with one child.

"I think we can make a strong case for the increase," Perry says. "It's the least we can do for these people."

The increase is long overdue, says Bob Beckett, veteran coordinator for Southern Oregon State College and a Vietnam veteran.

"It's not adequate but it's as much as we can reasonably expect Congress to pass."

The Senate should pass the increase without too much debate, Beckett says, adding

'My proposal is a very modest approach to correcting a gross inequality.'

that the real fight will be in the House — especially during an election year.

But Beckett says the proposal may have a good chance of gaining House approval because the increase won't affect this year's budget and politicians running for re-election can boast of voting for a trim national budget.

And because the increase would begin in September, "it's a nice tactic to give voters a convenient raise before the elections," Beckett says.

In addition to the increase, many veterans would like an extension of the 10-year eligibility period for G.I. educational benefits, he says.

The Senate has passed bills during the last few years that would extend the eligibility period by two years but the bills have died in the House, Beckett says.

Until 1975, when the benefits were increased 22 percent, many veterans could not afford to go to school on the G.I. bill, he says. In 1975-76 the number of Vietnam veterans using their benefits increased by 50 percent.

Recent increases in student financial aid and the G.I. bill enables many veterans to afford higher education, but some are running out of benefit time.

"A lot of my 10 years of eligibility was wasted," Beckett says. "When I got out of the service, I couldn't afford to go to school."

A 1979 Veterans Administration report indicates more than 50 percent of combat veterans have not used their educational benefits and 40 percent have used only a year or less.

Last month Beckett conducted a comparative study of educational benefits offered to

ASUO to attend conference

ASUO Pres. Scott Bassett and vice presidents Dennis Mohatt and Mylene Simons will fly to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 29 for a four-day National Student Conference.

Bassett says he is using \$774 in ASUO funds, which are taken from incidental fees, to pay for only one University representative to the conference.

"We're splitting the difference between us and going at

our own personal expense," he says.

Bassett says he will ask the Incidental Fee Committee for additional money to allow University Veteran Russ Linebarger to make the trip. Linebarger is scheduled to give a workshop on how to stop draft registration on campus.

The conference, sponsored by the American Student Association, will feature 30 workshops, an observation of

Congressional sessions and a sightseeing tour of the city.

Scheduled workshops include mini-courses on fighting tuition increases, budgeting incidental fees, obtaining faculty evaluations, complying with Title IX and stopping rape on campus.

Bassett says he is especially interested in a discussion on the status of work study.

"They're talking about turning it around to reflect the title of the job. In other words, work-study positions would be related to a course of study."

Work study is now nothing more than cheap labor, Bassett says.

"There's a lot of support for making it more academically inclined."

The conference runs from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at the Hotel Washington, one block from the White House.

Bike committee reviews campus lanes proposals

The University of Oregon Better Biking Committee met Wednesday to discuss the result of last month's bike auction and strategy to bring about improved campus bicycle facilities.

The Dec. 8 bike auction netted more than \$2,000 from the sale of two-thirds of the University's impounded bicycles, according to Steve Brian, committee chair.

"This is seed money to begin striping," Brian said, adding the new striped bike lanes must be located carefully because they are costly to remove.

A major goal of the bike committee is implementation of bike lanes on campus.

Use of the auction money will also influence acquisition of bicycle funds from the University's proposed Capital Construction Program, he said.

Carl Hosticka, a community service and public affairs professor, emphasized bicycle planning is not accommodated in the campus planning budget.

But the auction money could lead to a bike appropriation from funds under the control of Ray Hawk, vice president for administration and finance, said Don Chalmers, director of the Office of Student Advocacy.

Scott Bassett, ASUO president, and Jason Ruderman, a University student, suggested that the bike committee staff a booth at the "Surviving the 80's" Conference, scheduled to run Tuesday through Jan. 21.

Brian said the committee seeks not to create animosity between bikers and auto users, but rather, a mutual understanding.

The Better Biking Committee will meet Wednesday, time and room to be announced.

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