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My name is James W. Manning and I reside at 3618 Corlies Avenue, Neptune, NJ 07753

I was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. (February 11, 1933)

I enlisted in the U.S. Army on May 1, 1950. I took Basic in Fort Dix, New Jersey; Airborne Training at Fort Benning, Georgia and served with the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I went to Korea in the Spring of 1951, and served with the 187<sup>th</sup> Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Japan and Korea until my discharge in April of 1953.

I joined the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers in 1954, and retired in 1995. I also did a short hitch with the Newark Police Department during the summer of 1955.

I am married to Florence M. Manning and had 4 children, 3 surviving.

I joined the V.F.W. in 1953 in Manasquan, New Jersey but did not become active until I joined the Neptune, New Jersey Post #2639 in 1990. I have served as Post Commander, County Commander, along with a while bunch of other titles. Presently, I am Post Quartermaster/Adjutant; I'm also a member of American Legion Post \$343 in Neptune, and a member of AMVETS Post #18, in Bridgewater, New Jersey.

I am also currently Department of New Jersey V.F.W. Chief of Staff, and Legislative Agent.

**Remarks of James W. Manning, Commissioner  
Township of Neptune Housing Authority  
Monmouth County, New Jersey**

**Homeless Veterans and Section 8**

Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished Committee Members. My name is James W. Manning, and I'd like to thank the distinguished Chairman for the invitation to testify today. I'd like to add at the out-set, that although I'm a Commissioner of the Neptune Housing Authority, a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and the AMETS, I am not representing any organization per se, I'm here as a Veteran's Activist.

I have been a member of the New Jersey Veterans of Foreign Wars Legislative Committee for some seven years, and this year I'm Chief of Staff of the New Jersey State V.F.W., along with being Legislative Agent. (That may sound impressive, but my annual budget is \$300.00; that should put it in proper perspective.)

During the years on the Legislative Committee, my interest has been in Veterans' Health Care and Homeless Veterans; and as you are well aware Mr. Chairman, the fight for adequate funding is a yearly knock-down, drag-out struggle, with the Veteran coming up short.

Early in 2002, shortly after President Bush signed your H.R. 2716 into P.L. 107-95, many of us in the Veterans' Community attended your press conference in Trenton, New Jersey which announced the finer points of the new law. I remember asking you how many of the Section 8 vouchers we could expect in our part of New Jersey. You answered the breakdown had not yet been made. I also remember that there were some

homeless Veterans testifying that day as to the merits of the new law. It was truly a happy day for Veterans, especially homeless Veterans.

Since I had been appointed a Commissioner to my local Housing Authority in Neptune, New Jersey, I started asking questions at the seminars that we as Public Housing Authority Commissioners frequently attended. When I mentioned the V.A. in conjunction with Section 8 vouchers, most people looked at me as if I had three heads. In addition, the higher ranking Housing Authority people seemed to brush me off. This surprised me, as I thought that all Housing people worked together for the good of all. Then, it dawned on me: the salaried high ranking Housing Authority people are simply not interested in V.A. vouchers because if the local Authorities don't administer these vouchers, there are no administrative fees. Having struck out in that area, I turned to Henrietta Fischman, up in Bronx, New York, John Kuhns, at Lyons, and of course, John Bradley. I was finally told that there is no funding for the Section 8's in the new law, and furthermore there may never be funding for that part of the law.

Now ready to give up yet, I spoke to the grant writer from the Neptune Housing Authority, who advised me that we may be able to help Homeless Veterans with the 58 new Section 8 vouchers that our Authority will receive on January 1, 2003. With this gentleman's help, we proposed a resolution giving Veterans preference on our Section 8 waiting list. Our resolution passed, and we were on our way, we thought.

A short time later, New Jersey Governor McGreevey issued a command call, and the New Jersey Department of Military Affairs, the National Guard, the Adjutant General, etc. along with service organizations met, for the purposes of discussing the needs of New Jersey's Veteran population. I gave a short presentation on homeless vets, including Section 8's, during the program. Afterward, a young woman approached me, who described herself as a resident of Veterans' Haven, who was a single Mom, and would be graduating from Veterans' Haven in a couple of months. The next question was about a Section 8 voucher, and how she would go about getting one. She told me that she had a sister who lived in Neptune, and since the Medical Center is right there, she felt that she could get employment at the hospital, since she was some kind of nurse. I thought that was great; it sounded like a win-win situation.

Backing up a little, I'd like to explain that Veterans' Haven is a transitional housing facility, whose residents have mainly drug and alcohol problems (97% to 98%). The maximum stay is 24 months, and the average stay is 11 months.

The next problem with using the Neptune Section 8's is that an applicant must be drug and alcohol free for a period of seven years. To illustrate, if a person is convicted of a drug or alcohol violation of the law, and winds up on probation for five years, the seven year period to qualify for a Neptune Township Section 8 begins at the termination of the probation; that effectively makes the waiting period twelve years. So, the first two names of Veterans whose names that I submitted to the Neptune Housing Authority were

disqualified almost immediately. The young woman that I described earlier never submitted an application, and sad to say, I heard last week, that she has relapsed. Because of privacy considerations, I still don't know what her problem was.

The point that I'm trying to make is that I believe that our Veterans need a special way of their own to obtain these housing vouchers. The civilian Commissioners on Housing Authorities across our nation have rules and regulations for the normal civilian population. I think that special consideration, and special tailoring is needed in helping our homeless Veterans who have been exposed to the rigors of combat stress and other stressful factors involved in military service. Consider the suicide problem in Iraq, for an example. The last figures that I heard are in the upper teens. Our military people are special people, and in some cases, need special treatment as concerns housing.

On May 3, 2004, I attended a meeting of a committee on which I serve, which is making an effort to create a Veterans Haven - Jersey Shore. It is to be patterned after the original Veterans' Haven in Winslow Township. One of the sites being considered is the old Fort Hancock area at Sandy Hook. There are some major renovations going on at this time, mainly to house schools and colleges. The Committee also felt that the prospective homeless residents could also work for the National Park Service during their rehabilitation. The Park Service, I understand has already been contacted in this regard. The draw back here, is that the NIMBYs are already at work, so we are being forced to look at alternate spots. The project is still in the beginning stage, and we are now seeking

financing for the project. The preparation will cost approximately \$200,000. Then, there is the expense of professionals, insurance, etc. I'm now getting to the point: Section 8's. If we are successful with this program, we'll still need housing when the prospective homeless Veterans graduate, or are ready to re-join the regular population. I'm typing this report on May 13, 2004, and a homeless Vet called our V.F.W. Post this morning asking for me by name, and asking for help with a Section 8 voucher. I referred him to the Neptune Township Housing Authority for an application, but I also cautioned him not to get his hopes up, because I believe our Authority has stopped taking applications in order to get their waiting list in order, after a recent review by H.U.D. The man was referred to me at the unemployment office in Neptune.

These types of stories are commonplace around our area in Neptune, New Jersey. Now that summer is coming, we'll see more homeless people on the beaches and under the boardwalks.

In conclusion, I'd like to say I don't believe that the Section 8 program is the cure-all, or for everyone. A dormitory setting may be good for some people. But for those Veterans who suffer from PTSD, for example, and those who turn to drugs and alcohol due to their military service, I think, that the Section 8 program for Veterans can be the difference between success and failure in their attempt to make their recoveries from substance abuse, with the help of their families, in a home setting.

To give an idea of the worth of a Section 8 voucher in dollars: In Neptune, New Jersey, a one bedroom apartment is fair marketed at \$878.00. If a person makes \$20,000.00, \$480.00 is deducted from the \$20,000.00 for the dependent, next, 30% of the balance is \$5,856.00, divided by 12, equals \$488.00 which would be the renter's share of the rent. The Housing Authority's share is \$878.00 minus \$488.00, which equals \$390.00. This obviously is a great help when the price of food and utilities is considered.

In closing, I believe that the Veteran's Administration should make Section 8 vouchers available as soon as possible, by providing the necessary funding needed for the program, especially in light of the many men and women now in the Mid-East who eventually will be home and in need of housing.

Thank you for your time and patience.