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This Week In Congress Radio Address: Plan to Merge Wilmington and Philadelphia VA  
Hospitals, 1959 May 8

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear

Transcribed by: David Cardillo

**[00:00]**

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1959.

Mr. Kelly: From Washington, DC, United States Senator J. Allen Frear reports again to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, Senator Frear.

Senator Frear: Thank you, Mr. Kelly. I want to comment this week on the interest of so many of our former Delaware servicemen who individually, and as members of various veteran organizations, have been urging postponement of plans to merge certain facilities of our Veterans Administration Regional Office in Wilmington with those of Philadelphia. This is a subject that has received a great deal of attention in Washington by Delaware's congressional delegation over the past few weeks. There have been meetings held, innumerable phone conversations, informal conferences, and other negotiations in an effort to resolve this situation satisfactorily. However, it now appears that the administrator of Veteran's Affairs is satisfied that the transfer of the (unintelligible 01:18) and vocational rehabilitation and educational functions of our Delaware office will be as efficiently performed in Philadelphia as they have been in Delaware. It is natural that the people of our state would question the wisdom of this action. The Veteran's Administration in Washington has advised that the decline in workloads in the two divisions in the Delaware office makes it essential to reduce what it calls overhead and supervisory expenses. This may be true. I have told the administrator that his responsibility for carrying out the mission of his agency to serve our veterans under the provisions of existing law is fully appreciated. It has never been my policy to try to dictate a specific course of action to any bureau of the government. Rather, I believe that the officials and the operating personnel of these various Federal departments should have sufficient knowledge and capabilities to carry out their assignment. On the other hand, as a member of Congress, which is the law-making body of the people, it is both desirable and necessary that continued attention be maintained to make certain that the many statutes governing the operation of the Federal agencies be properly administered. In the instance which we had been discussing, the considered opinion of many, many capable and responsible Delawareans, as expressed to me, is that the former serviceman and woman of our state will not be as well served by the transfer of these important functions. This point of view has been made known in detail to the highest-ranking officials of the Veteran's

Administration, including Mr. Sumner G. Whittier, its administrator. After weighing all the facts, the administrator advised me last week that his agency had no choice but to proceed with the merger move. I can only hope his decision will prove to be as beneficial to our veterans as was the former office arrangement in Delaware. At the same time, I cannot help but express some doubt along these lines, for it seems to me that our needs could best be served by the availability of a fully complete Veteran's Administration office within the boundaries of our own state. Historically, Delaware has suffered by virtue of its location with respect to various Federal activities. Because Philadelphia on the north and Baltimore on the south, are larger and more populous cities, the government frequently locates in those cities major regional offices which have jurisdiction over the Federal responsibilities in Delaware. While all of us are anxious to make the most efficient use of public funds, I am whole-heartedly convinced that the millions of tax dollars, which are annually collected from our state for the Federal Treasury, want in return a reasonable and proportionate share of Federal recognition to us of the first state.

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation's capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time, speaking from the Senate Office Building in Washington.

**[End 05:19]**