

Further Information behind House Resolution 6285 – Creating a Special Legislative Commission to Study and Make Recommendations for a Plan and the Design of a Vietnam Memorial Located in the City of Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Esteemed Members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee,

As the author of the communications to Chairman Azzinaro which have led to this resolution, I would like to expand somewhat on what is stated in the resolution for a better understanding of our objectives. While the effort to this point originated with the Rhode Island State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, we completely understand the need for, and we unequivocally desire, the full participation of all other veterans' organizations in Rhode Island.

We envision a living monument which will be a healing and inspirational legacy to those native sons and daughters of Rhode Island who honorably served during the Vietnam War. To that end, we desire a commission which will encompass all segments of our state's population at the time who bore the brunt of military service during the Vietnam Era. We especially wish to include members of the state's veteran population who are often overlooked and who, in many cases, do not belong to our established veterans' organizations so as to ensure their experiences are expressed. This would include female veterans, African-American veterans, Narragansett Indian veterans, Cape Verdian veterans and Puerto Rican veterans.

With this thought in mind, I would like to humbly submit several names for inclusion on the commission. The first is a member of HVAC, Danny Evangelista. Danny has been involved in serving Rhode Island's veteran community for over forty years, going back to the days of the old Vietnam Era Veterans Association (VEVA), and has continued this dedicated service to the present. His service and fine qualities hopefully need no explanation. The second person is Wayne "Doc" Smith, another native Rhode Island Vietnam veteran with a lifelong record of service to veterans' issues on both the local and national levels. He routinely works with our congressional delegation in Washington and, as an African-American veteran, can assist in ensuring that community's voice. His many contributions over the years are too numerous to list. The third is Michael Manoog Kaprielian. Michael is also a Vietnam veteran who has spent a lifetime being involved in humanitarian causes. He is the Rhode Island Coordinator of Amnesty International, a lifetime member of the NAACP, among other organizations. He was appointed by a joint commission of the US Congress to be one of twenty-five Vietnam veterans who went and met with Soviet veterans of the Afghan/Soviet War and he worked on the design of the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, DC. He has direct connections to women veterans of Vietnam, a former POW who lives in Rhode Island, as well as tremendous community links. All three of these submissions have known each other, and worked together on veterans' issues, for many years. I gladly give-up any consideration for myself to be included on the commission in deference to these three pillars of Rhode Island's Vietnam veteran community.

Sincerely,

Brian Carn
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Rhode Island State Council Vietnam Veterans of America

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