

February 8, 2022

Subject: Letter in support of H6606.

Dear Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi, Chairman Samuel A. Azzinaro and the Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing to you in order to express my support for H6606 and the creation of a commission to study the eventual construction of a Vietnam War Memorial in our capital city, Providence. I served during the tail-end of the Vietnam War along Korea's DMZ and still carry the emotional scarring from having felt the nation's scorn at that time period towards those who had served faithfully, trustingly, and honorably in answering their country's call. Many of my compatriots who served carry scars far worse than I from this era.

This shunning of Vietnam Veterans at that time, which thankfully has been acknowledged as wrong by many of those who had once turned their backs on us, made many of us stronger, more resilient, and led to our quietly becoming giving, productive members of society. I personally became a teacher and taught my whole career in an inner city school - Hope High School in Providence.

Time moves on and now the average age of a Vietnam Veteran is about 73 years. I am probably as young as you can get at 64, I know of many who are now over 80. Please don't wait to do the right thing until most of us are no longer above ground to see our State recognize us for having served in this nation's most unpopular war. I, for one, am proud to have gone when others wouldn't go and do what I felt I should do even though it wasn't the favored choice of many of my peers.

Sincerely,

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(The writer currently serves as the Vice-President of the Rhode Island Vietnam Veterans of America State Council and is a member of the United Veterans Council of Rhode Island.)