

February 25, 2022

Subject: Letter in support of H6606

Dear Speaker K. Joseph Sekarchi, 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 Memorial in our capital city, Providence.

I served in Vietnam. I served honorably, and am an upstanding citizen. I often think of those that didn't make it home and made the ultimate sacrifice for the call of duty by serving our country. The pain of knowing that their families have never been the same and have not been able to grow with their loved ones like those we protected were able to do, is heartbreaking.

It is so important that they never be forgotten for that sacrifice. One way to honor them is to have a place alongside others where people can reflect and see these names so they can be honored in the way they should and never be forgotten.

This is also a great opportunity to show the diversity of all of us that fought arm in arm for one cause; to gain peace.

It is my understanding that if you do not get enough letters of support that nothing will move forward with this construction. I am a member of Chapter 273, Vietnam Veterans of America. I also serve on the float committee for parades. I would like to invite anyone that wants to see our support for our veterans to please march with us in the Gaspee Days Parade, in which we won an award for our float. We also tow our float in the Bristol 4th of July Parade, the Woonsocket Autumnfest Parade where we also won an award, and the Columbus Day Parade in Providence, RI. Sometimes we cannot find the number of marchers we need, but we will always take our float when we can.

I was not allowed to join a Veteran's association when I returned home from war. I was told I was no good and they didn't want my kind. This treatment is why so many that served retreated and headed for the hills. Being asked now to march in parades and honor our fallen veterans with a float in honor of them means so much to us, as well as all of the families of our fallen soldiers. Many approach the float and say things like, "that's my brother," or "I went to school with him," among other things. We give those people a rose to lay on the float. Gone, but not forgotten. People clap and wave their flag as we ride by. To experience this response is heartwarming and sometimes I cannot help but tear up.

So I ask you to help us with another way to honor our fallen soldiers by supporting the construction of this Vietnam Memorial in the Capital City of Providence. Give these

families a permanent place where they can honor the members of their family whenever they want.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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