

# Vietnam War Memorial Fund

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“Let Us Honor Our Warriors and Remember the Fallen”

**Testimony before Senate Committee on Veterans  
Hearing on Senate Bill 1542  
February 5, 2020 @ 3:00 pm**

**Submitted by: Steve Bates, President  
Vietnam War Memorial Fund**

Chair Olsen, Vice Chair Monnes Anderson and Senator Manning,

The United States of America Commemoration of the Vietnam War is currently on going. This national Commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the secretary of defense, and launched by the president during May, 2012. It will continue through Veterans Day, November 11, 2025. This program commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War and recognizes all who served on active duty in the U. S. Armed Forces, regardless of location, during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975 as a Vietnam Veteran.

While 2020 brings another year our Vietnam Veterans are a year older and there is still not a Vietnam War Memorial in Oregon’s capital city of Salem.

It has been said by several Oregonians that we have an urgent situation. Time is running out. The window of opportunity is slowly closing for the state of Oregon to honor its Vietnam Veterans while they are still with us.

Currently, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office are reviewing a proposed design for such a memorial.

During the Vietnam War Era, over 9 million Americans served in the United States Military. More than 2.7 million served in Vietnam of which about 57,000 were Oregonians. It is estimated that a total of 180,000 from Oregon served during the Vietnam War Era. Currently, it is estimated with data provided by the United States Census Bureau, about 100,000 Oregon Vietnam Era Veterans are alive today.

The average age of our Vietnam Veterans is now over 70. The Vietnam Veterans of America announced that the average age of their membership in 2019 was 72.

**The Fund for a Vietnam Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds**  
*The Vietnam War Memorial Fund is a non-profit charitable organization*  
Tax ID Number: 82-2492302

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The United States Department of Veterans Affairs published a report that forecast 14,000 Oregon Vietnam Veterans either have passed away or will die between 2015 and 2020 at a rate of 8 veterans per day.

It is inevitable that our Vietnam Veterans will leave us.

Vietnam Veteran and United Mine Workers of America, International Union President Cecil E. Roberts made this statement in March, 2019: “With an estimated 390 Vietnam Veterans passing (nationwide) each day there will be few, if any alive in 10 years.”

The state of Oregon dedicated a beautiful World War II Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds on June 6, 2014. At that time, over 95% of all World War II veterans were gone already. It is important that a Vietnam Memorial be raised quickly. The Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds is needed sooner rather than later.

We are working as quickly as we can.

In conclusion: Senate Bill 1542 has within it an Emergency Clause to make it effective upon passage and receiving the Governor’s signature. This speaks to the urgency of this situation.

Passing this bill will give our donors confidence that this memorial will be built. Passing this bill will demonstrate the cumulative voice of the citizens of the state of Oregon through its legislature declaring that our Vietnam Veterans must receive the honor and admiration they earned over 50 years ago.

We ask that you pass this bill, post haste, to the Senate Floor with a Do Pass recommendation.

We are grateful for your efforts on behalf of this bill and our Vietnam Veterans.

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