

Bend Heroes Foundation
1900 NE 3rd St., Ste 106, #205
Bend , OR 97701

April 21, 2021

Representative Paul Evans
Chair, House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management
900 Court St. NE, H-471
Salem. OR 97301

Dear Chair Evans and Committee Members:

Re SB 319: Relating to a memorial to Oregon's Vietnam War veterans; and declaring an emergency

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 319. I am a 2 tour combat wounded Vietnam War veteran, an Advisor to the Vietnam War Memorial Fund Chaired by Steve Bates and Chairman, Bend Heroes Foundation.

You will hear more than ample testimony in support of SB 319 from Mr. Bates and others. I would like to just highlight a few facts.

For the 5 major wars since WWI that 480,000 Oregonians served in, the number of Vietnam veterans serving (over 119,000) was second only to WWII (152,000). They served during a war that lasted over twice as long as WWII with many veterans serving multiple tours.

It is well known that Vietnam War veterans were treated poorly by the public upon their return home. Many still suffer emotionally and some have either died or still suffer from exposure to Agent Orange.

The Oregon WWII Memorial was dedicated when a great majority of Oregon's WWII veterans had already passed away. Veterans from the Korean War and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were honored with memorials while a majority of those veterans were living.

Vietnam War Veterans are the largest segment – about one-third of Oregon's 303,700 living veterans. It is long past time to honor them and their families with the grand memorial proposed by Mr. Bates and his team that will help heal and honor them and let them know Oregon never forget its veterans.

Like the WWII Memorial, the State of Oregon provides the land and veterans raise the funds to build the memorial.

The proposed Vietnam War Memorial on the Capitol grounds adjacent to the Oregon WWII Memorial is also a grand and unique opportunity to also honor Combat Wounded/Purple Heart recipients from all wars, Gulf War veterans, POWS and MIAs and Gold Star Families of all wars not now honored at or near the Capitol. We may never have this unique opportunity in the future.

I respectfully request your committee vote Do Pass on SB 319.

Respectfully,



Dick Tobiason

Chairman

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