

February 22, 1980

Dear Mr. Peterson:

I am writing in reply to the request for the Commission's views on S.J. Res. 119, a bill that would authorize the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Inc. to erect a memorial.

The Commission considered this legislation at its public meeting on February 12, 1980. While there were no objections to the concept of the proposed memorial, the Commission did take strong exception to the bill's provision specifying a specific site.

The Commission believes, as it has over many years, that it is inappropriate to designate a specific site for a memorial until more is known about its intended character. In addition, we are particularly concerned in this instance with a proposed memorial for Constitution Gardens, since the gardens were specially designed as an informal park where people could find a different sort of experience in contrast to adjoining memorial areas of the city. It is the Commission's belief that if Constitution Gardens is to become the setting for major memorials, and certainly the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is in this category, the intended character of the park will be seriously diminished, if not lost altogether.

The Commission is ready to look at the specific proposals, when they are ready, and is not in a position to rule out any possibility at this juncture. Meanwhile, however, it urges that any specific reference to a site be deleted from the legislation, and that the bill simply authorize the construction of a memorial in the District of Columbia or immediate environs.

The Commission pledges its earnest efforts to work with the National Park Service and other relevant authorities to find the

most appropriate and enhancing site for this important memorial.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown  
Chairman

Mr. Ronald Peterson  
Assistant Director  
Legislative Reference  
Office of Management & Budget  
Washington, D. C. 20503

CHA:ko:hg