

we retain a preference for option "A". However, in the interest of bringing the controversy that has raged for a period of time to a conclusion, we would leave the final decision to you and your judgment, and would ask that this decision be an expedient one.

We thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Gordon Mansfield.

MR. MANSFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I have a statement which I have given to the reporter, and I also have copies available for the members.

In the interest of time -- I realize you have a lengthy agenda here -- I would like to summarize my points.

First of all, my name is Gordon Mansfield, and I work for the Paralyzed Veterans of America. I am the National Advocacy Program Director. I think if you could describe my job in one word, that word would be "access".

Paralyzed Veterans of America consists of approximately 11,000 members, all of whom have suffered spinal cord injury or dysfunction. A significant number of our members are Vietnam veterans, as I am.

In addition, in our work here in Washington through a Service Program, a Research Program, an Advocacy Program,

and Legislative Program, we find that we deal with and represent the interest of a considerable number of other disabled persons, along with veterans. A figure used in this City numbers 35 million Americans among us who are disabled, veterans and non-veterans.

I would like to talk to you today on their behalf, specifically on PVA's behalf, but I ask you to consider, also, the Gold Star Mother of a deceased Vietnam veteran whose name appears on that wall and who may be aging and suffering from arthritis and is mobility-impaired. I think we have to take their problems into account.

I don't want to endorse any of these concepts before you, but I do want to point out something that I think you have -- in fact, I know you have to consider when you reach a decision, and I would like to emphasize that the decision you reach here today is going to be carried over and will result in, which I am going to discuss, in what I see as a problem. We in PVA who work on access traditionally run into a problem where we see that artificial barriers are created in development and planning of any structure that is built. In this instance with the VVMF, I am pleased to say I have been able to work with Bob Doubeck, especially, from that organization and the issue as to handicapped access has been

considered. You can see the walkway there. Also, PVA has handicapped parking which is located to the north of any of these drawings, along Constitution Avenue. What I want to tell you here today is that I think when you make your decision on any of these proposals, you have to consider what is going to happen for handicapped access.

We have heard discussions and suggestions that have been raised by a Board member and also one of the architectural personnel. Let me say right now to me and other handicapped Americans no pathway is mundane--hard surface or not. That may mean whether I go there or don't go there. It is not mundane. Part of the question is are disabled Vietnam veteran and other handicapped individuals going to be able to experience this entire memorial, and again I am talking about the entire memorial, the whole area.

PVA came before you in a previous meeting and explained our position was that we believed it should be a Vietnam Veteran Memorial and shouldn't be split into parts. I also don't believe using the word "additions" is correct. But I would like you to consider the fact that for a person in a wheelchair, considering the fact that there is going to be an inscription on that flag pole, I would like you to consider how do I and others get there to read that inscription, or

how do I get there to see the service crest for the service in which I served in Vietnam.

In addition to that, we have got experience behind us, which was explained by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. I don't know if you went down and made a site visit this time, but I am sure you are aware there have been problems with the surface area. Right now you have got two board walkways in there. They are temporary. I understand that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is working with the Park Service and the Enkomat people in trying to develop a better hard surface, a better surface to replace what is there.

However, what I think you are going to have to consider, considering the number of people that are coming to this memorial, is that when you make the decision on placement, and we have heard that there was talk about hard surface walkways going from one place to the other to be considered in the future, you have to consider it now is what we are saying, and you have to realize where you place that flag pole, where you place the locators, where you place the statue, are going to determine where that walkway goes in the future.

Let me point out right now the handicapped parking is way up here. People are going to have to move from this area. As far as I know, nothing has been considered as far as

walkways in this area. You might think about that. You have to move via the existing walkways or the newly created walkways all of the way around to this area, number one, to see the locator. And I would like to compliment the VVMF for the fact as of the present date it shows their concern, the fact that they are working on it.

I think the design would be successful, but the flow pattern for handicapped or mobility-impaired person, if the placement is in this area near the flagpole, they will have to come all of the way around. If this is the entrance area, the next problem is how do you get from the locator to the flag pole to see the inscription, through the path to experience the sculpture, to the walkway to see the walls, and I think you have to consider what is going to happen in this part of the ground.

You already know what has happened to what is down there now, based on past experience. You can see the grounds now. It is not working, what they have. They may be able to come up with a solution. You have heard them say they are considering hard surface walkways. What I am saying to you today is consider where the hard surface walkway is going to go in relation to where you are going to place those items today.