

speak in support who were not recognized, so if you will bear with us, just to complete that part of the meeting, we will call on Richard F. Weidman.

MR. WEIDMAN: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to address this Commission today, and I will try to be brief.

I speak on behalf of Vietnam Veterans of America, a national membership organization of men and women who served in the U. S. military during the Vietnam War. Vietnam Veterans of America as an organization, and I personally, urge you to clear the way for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to be dedicated in November of this year.

The impetus that has brought us this far began with a resolution introduced by the Vietnam Veterans in Congress Caucus, cosponsored by 235 members, and passed by the Congress in October of 1978. That Congressional resolution called upon the President to declare a national Vietnam Veterans Week at the end of May 1979, for the Nation to finally begin to pay due respect for service rendered to country in difficult circumstances. As you undoubtedly know, Vietnam Veterans Week took on a "life of its own" and became a watershed event for Vietnam Veterans. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund grew out of the energy and spirit of that week, as many

people, Veterans and nonveterans alike, agreed that it was time for all Americans to honor those members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in service to their country in Vietnam. The motivation was clear, decent and pure: to honor our dead and missing fellow citizens who were lost in service to country.

Much has happened since mid-1979. As has been the case in the history of many of our national monuments (i.e., the Washington Monument, among many others), there has been much sound and fury over the plans and design. In all of the tumult of arguments, debates and whatever over designs, proper procedures, or personal and professional prerogatives, only three things remain absolutely clear:

First, that it is right to honor those whom we lost;

Second, that the overwhelming majority of Vietnam Veterans and all Americans support the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; and

Third, the means is at hand to consummate the memorial that is so fitting and so long overdue. I urge you to bear in mind that simple, pure and right goal; honoring our dead ; ; and to ignore and/or see through the nonsense to let us get on with our primary purpose. Now is the time.

Thank you.