

Committee on Resources

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SCRIPT FOR ROBERT DUVAL REGARDING VISITOR CENTER AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL (HR 1442) MAY 21 2003

MR CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

I AM HONORED TO SHOW MY STRONG SUPPORT FOR A VISITOR CENTER AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL. I AM THE SON OF A CAREER NAVAL OFFICER. HE TAUGHT ME LOVE OF COUNTRY. THAT LOVE OF COUNTRY ALSO MADE ME A VETERAN OF THE U.S. ARMY.

LOVE OF COUNTRY. WHERE ELSE CAN WE SEE THIS LOVE SO VIVIDLY THAN AT THIS PLACE? OVER 58,000 CITIZENS HAVE THEIR NAMES ENGRAVED HERE. WHO IS NOT MOVED BY THESE NAMES, THESE HEROES?

LET US PASS THIS BILL. AMERICA'S YOUTH WILL SOMEDAY SEE THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BRAVE SOLDIERS WHO DID THEIR DUTY FOR OUR COUNTRY IN A PRIVATELY FUNDED VISITOR CENTER. THIS JUST MAY BECOME THE MOST PROFOUNDLY MEMORABLE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN WASHINGTON DC AS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CENTER WORKS IN SYNERGY WITH THE MEMORIAL.

THIS IS THE 3RD TIME CONGRESS HAS TRIED TO PASS THIS BILL. MR. CHAIRMAN I SALUTE YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO FINALLY GETTING THIS JOB DONE.

THERE WERE THOSE WHO TWO DECADES AGO DID NOT WANT THIS MEMORIAL ON THE MALL. BUT THE WISDOM OF THE CONGRESS PREVAILED. AND THANKFULLY. NOW WE MUST COMPLETE THE TASK. AS THIS MEMORIAL HAS EVOLVED FROM THE WALL THAT HEALS TO THE WALL THAT EDUCATES – AMERICA'S YOUTH MUST HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN PATRIOTISM AND SACRIFICE AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL.

EVERY DECENT AMERICAN I KNOW AGREES WITH ME WHEN I SAY

THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR IN THE PRECEDENT OF EDUCATING YOUTH THAT WILL BE SET BY THIS VISITOR CENTER. EDUCATION IS NEVER DANGEROUS. YOUNG AMERICANS COULD AND SHOULD HAVE LEARNED ABOUT PATRIOTISM AND SACRIFICE AT THE WALL WITH A VISITOR CENTER LONG AGO. I ESPECIALLY THANK THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR FRAN MAINELLA FOR SUPPORT OF THIS CONCEPT.

I HAD A GREAT LINE FROM APOCALYPSE NOW – WHERE I PLAYED LT COL KILGORE.

THE LINE WAS "SOME DAY THIS WAR IS GONNA END."

IN A PROFOUND SENSE THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF THAT WAR IS NOT OVER. THE VIETNAM WAR CHANGED OUR COUNTRY AND HAS ONGOING IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL AMERICANS. YET HERE AT THIS SACRED SITE –THOSE WHO TOOK OPPOSING VIEWS STAND UNITED IN RESPECT FOR THE CITIZENS WHOSE NAMES ARE ENGRAVED. THIS IS WHERE WE MUST HAVE THE VISITOR CENTER. RIGHT HERE AT THE WALL.

THIS IS A HISTORIC DAY. THIS IS A HISTORIC HEARING AT THE SITE OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL – A VISITOR CENTER FOR AMERICA IS CLOSER TO BECOMING A REALITY.

I AM MOVED AS I LOOK AT THE YOUNG PEOPLE HERE TODAY- FUTURE LEADERS OF OUR COUNTRY ARE HERE TO PETITION CONGRESS.

THERE IS A VISITOR CENTER AT THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL AND THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL. A VISITOR CENTER IS PLANNED FOR THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT AS WELL.

YET VIETNAM VETERANS HAVE TO WAGE THIS STRUGGLE AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR THIS NOBLE CAUSE! I AM JUST SO PLEASED TO BE A PART OF IT AND AGAIN SALUTE THE WISDOM OF THIS COMMITTEE.

THE YOUNGSTERS HERE DESERVE TO LEARN- THEY DESERVE TO LEARN RIGHT HERE. THIS IS WHAT THIS HEARING IS ABOUT. IT IS ABOUT AMERICAS YOUTH. THEY ARE HERE TODAY PETITIONING CONGRESS. THIS HEARING IS ABOUT AMERICAN DEMOCRACY.

WE ARE THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE. WE ARE ALSO A LAND WHICH IS AT WAR WITH TERRORISTS WHO WANT TO DESTROY OUR CIVILIZATION. SOME OF THESE YOUNGSTERS MAY HAVE TO SERVE AS SOLDIERS TO DEFEND OUR NATION.

I END TODAY WITH A QUOTE FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS. "IT IS FOR US THE LIVING TO BE HERE DEDICATED TO THAT CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY GAVE THEIR LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION—THAT WE HERE HIGHLY RESOLVE THAT THESE DEAD SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN, THAT THIS NATION UNDER GOD SHALL HAVE A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM AND THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH'

THE SPIRITS OF THE SOLDIERS ON THIS MEMORIAL SPEAK TO US TO TODAY WITH THE SOUND OF A THOUSAND TRUMPETS AS THEY ECHO

THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH, "OPEN YE THE GATES THAT THE RIGHTEOUS NATION WHICH KEEPETH THE TRUTH MAY ENTER IN"

I URGE ALL EFFORTS TO PASS HR 1442. LET'S BRING ABOUT THIS VISITOR CENTER. WE OWE IT TO THOSE WHO ARE ON THIS MEMORIAL.

WE OWE THIS TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS.

WE OWE IT TO THOSE WHO ARE TOO YOUNG TO KNOW.

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