

This Week in Washington

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Chairman Richard W. Pombo rings NYSE opening bell on Wall Street

New York, NY (October 20) – House Committee on Resources Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA) rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange with Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) founder and president Jan C. Scruggs. They were joined by high school students, teachers and distinguished Vietnam Veterans.

“It is truly an honor to ring the bell that commences \$40 billion worth of commerce every day,” Chairman Pombo said. “Being on the floor of the Stock Exchange was a very powerful experience, as it is definitely the nerve center of capitalism and economic freedom.”

“It was just an added bonus that the market immediately went up 12 points,” Pombo joked.

“It is also an honor to be here with VVMF president Jan Scruggs to celebrate last week’s House passage of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Act. This victory is for America’s young people and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War. We can never forget those who tirelessly serve our nation,” said Pombo.

The New York Stock Exchange is the world’s largest equities market, trading 1.42 billion shares on an average day. Today’s bell ringing, watched by more than an estimated 100 million people, marks the Sixth Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund’s Corporate Council Meeting being held at the Stock Exchange. The event aims to support the Fund’s mission of healing and education.

On Wednesday, October 15, Chairman Pombo led the unanimous passage H.R. 1442 (Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Act) by the House of Representatives. The bill provides for the construction of a Visitor Center on the Memorial grounds in Washington, D.C. and virtually ends a three-year battle over the measure. Under the House legislation, the Visitor Center will be “located underground” and maintained by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center will provide a brief overview of the Memorial and all who served with the U.S. Armed Forces in Vietnam – specifically the more than 58,000 who made the ultimate sacrifice. The facility will feature photographs of those who were killed or remain missing as well as some of the more than 60,000 items that have been left at The Wall.

House Unanimously Passes Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Bill

Washington (October 15) – The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously approved H.R. 1442, a bill that authorizes the design and construction of a visitors center for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The bill, sponsored by Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA), will serve to educate visitors of the memorial and honor the memory of Vietnam veterans.

“We are one giant step closer to making this visitors center a reality,” Chairman Pombo said. “Today’s overwhelming support in the House of Representatives is a testament to the fact that building this center is the right thing to do. We owe it to our great American veterans and, most importantly, we owe it to our youth. This center will educate the memorial’s visitors on the sacrifices our veterans have made on their behalf - on behalf of freedom.”

“My colleagues and I ought to be proud of the action we took on the floor this afternoon,” said Chairman Pombo. “Too many people leave (*cont. rt. column*)

Congressman Pombo Salutes National Women in Business Week October 20-24, 2003

(Vietnam Vet. Memorial Bill Cont.)

Washington without fully appreciating the stories of those whose names are etched in granite on the wall. This addition to the memorial is the right venue for these stories to be told.”

“I want to thank Jan Scruggs of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Without his tireless advocacy and unwavering leadership, we would not be here today celebrating this latest victory. I look forward to celebrating with Jan, at least one more time, when President Bush signs this bill into law.”

Over half the memorial’s annual visitors were born after the Vietnam War ended. Chairman Pombo’s bill authorizes the construction of a visitor’s center to facilitate self-guided tours for small groups of students and tourists. It will also serve as a facility to collect some of the more than 60,000 relics left by visitors each year, creating a unique historical record for future generations.

The visitor’s center will be built at no cost to American taxpayers. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the nonprofit organization authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1980 to build the memorial, would provide the funds for the center.

Visit resourcescommittee.house.gov for more info.