

VFW Pledges Full Support to Global War on Terror Memorial Act

This legislation would exempt the proposed memorial from a 30-year-old law

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WASHINGTON — The National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. Brian Duffy, has pledged the full support of the VFW and its Auxiliary organization's nearly 1.7 million members to the Global War on Terror Memorial Act. If passed, the legislation would exempt the proposed memorial from a 30-year-old law prohibiting the construction of a national memorial until 10 years after the official end of the respective conflict or



war.

“Nearly 2.8 million service members have shouldered the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for 15 years now, making this America’s longest war. More than 6,800 have died fighting, and another 50,000 have sustained wounds. It’s time America provides this latest generation of veterans with the formal recognition and appreciation they deserve with

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an official memorial alongside those of other veterans' memorials at Washington's National Mall. They've certainly earned this distinction," said Duffy.

After nearly two years of working on the draft legislation, the Global War on Terror Memorial Act (H.R. 5999) was officially introduced by three VFW members earlier this week: Rep. Ryan Zinke a Life member of VFW Post 276 in Whitefish, Mont., Rep. Seth Moulton, a member of VFW Post 2005 in Marblehead, Mass., and Andrew Brennan, the founder/executive director of the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation and member of VFW Post 3945 in Pittsburgh.

If passed, bringing H.R. 5999 to life will be a lengthy process. The planning and construction of the memorial itself is expected to take eight to ten years to complete, and this will come only after the proper funds have been secured. As drafted, the legislation provides no federal funding to the project. But, the passage of this legislation —while a preliminary step— will help to ensure those who've fought America's longest war are formally recognized and are able to visit a physical site which can help provide healing during their lifetimes, unlike many WWII veterans who waited nearly 60 years after their war for the completion of a memorial.

"Our nation was plunged into war 15 years ago after the September 11th terrorist attacks, and yet we are unable to build a memorial because of government regulations that stipulate when and where a memorial can be built. It's a disservice to the warriors and to the families," said Rep. Zinke, a retired Navy SEAL commander and commander of Joint Special Forces in Iraq (2004). "That's not right. The memorial will serve as a reminder of those we lost and of those who are still fighting. As somebody who has been to too many funerals for fallen soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, I can say without a doubt this memorial is greatly needed as part of the healing process."

The VFW first pledged its support of erecting a memorial dedicated to those who've served in support of the war in July, at the organization's 117th National Convention in Charlotte N.C., with the passage of resolution number 302.

"Our members are wholeheartedly behind this effort, and it starts with passing this legislation. We're a grassroots organization with strong representation in all 50 states, our members will immediately begin contacting their state representatives to voice their support of this initiative, and are prepared to also rally the support of our local and military communities.

"I want to sincerely thank Reps. Zinke and Moulton, as well as Mr. Brennan for introducing this very important legislation. With so many Americans having been affected by both the visible and invisible signs of war, paving the way for an official Global War on Terror Memorial is a great service to our veterans, service members and their families. We look

forward to working alongside you to see this endeavor come to fruition,” said Duffy.