

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HM 845 Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the End of the United States' Involvement in the Vietnam War

SPONSOR(S): State Affairs Committee, Metz

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Federal Affairs Subcommittee	10 Y, 0 N	Cyphers	Cyphers
2) State Affairs Committee	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	Cyphers	Hamby

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

March 29, 1973, marks the official end of the United States' military involvement in the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War, 58,220 service members died and 153,303 were wounded.¹ Of the 58,220 dead, 1,952 were from the state of Florida.

This memorial urges Congress to support the efforts of Florida and other states in the commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the end of the United States' involvement in Vietnam, and to demonstrate the nation's appreciation for the honorable service and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans.

The House Memorial does not amend, create, or repeal any provisions of the Florida Statutes.

The House Memorial has no fiscal impact on state or local government.

¹ <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

The United States began its direct involvement in the war between North and South Vietnam when France withdrew from the war in 1954 after their defeat at Dienbienphu. From 1954 until the war's end, the United States supported the efforts of South Vietnam (established as South of the 17th Parallel) to defend against the reunification efforts of communist insurgents in the South and the communist government of North Vietnam. The war also included the direct and indirect involvement of Laos and Cambodia, two countries situated to the West of North and South Vietnam.

On January 15, 1973, President Richard M. Nixon announced the ceasing of all offensive operations in North Vietnam. When the Paris Peace Accords were signed on January 27, 1973, the United State's participation in the Vietnam War was officially coming to an end. The first American prisoners of war were released on February 11, 1973, and all U.S. ground forces were to leave the country by March 29, 1973, thus marking the official end to the U.S. military's involvement in Vietnam. The United States, however, was still involved in the war through bombing support.

On January 26, 1973, Senators Clifford Case and Frank Church introduced a bill that barred any future use of American forces in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia without the authorization of the Congress. In June, 1973, a modified Case-Church amendment was passed which allowed military action to continue until August 15, 1973. After that date, all use of the American military was prohibited in Southeast Asia unless the president secured Congressional approval in advance.² Therefore, the Case-Church amendment and August 15, 1973, marked the end to direct military involvement in all Southeast Asia by the United States.

During the Vietnam War, 58,220 service members died and 153,303 were wounded.³ Of the 58,220 dead, 1,952 were from the state of Florida.⁴

Effects of Proposed Changes

This memorial urges Congress to support the efforts of Florida and other states in the commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the end of the United States' involvement in Vietnam, and to demonstrate the nation's appreciation for the honorable service and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans.

The memorial also asks Congress to authorize the minting of a medal that will commemorate the anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

Copies of the memorial are to be sent to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.

The legislation also includes whereas clauses in order to support the memorial. The whereas clauses include:

² http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Case-Church_Amendment.aspx

³ <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>

⁴ <http://thewall-usa.com/summary.asp>

WHEREAS, the Vietnam War was a Cold War military conflict that occurred in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from November 1, 1955, until the United States Congress passed the Case-Church amendment in 1973 which prohibited the further use of American military forces in the conflict, and

WHEREAS, 2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, and

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 650,000 Vietnam veterans in the State of Florida, and

WHEREAS, because of the intense public opposition to the war that existed at the time, members of the United States Armed Services returned home to an unprecedented lack of formal positive recognition of the honorable service they had provided on behalf of their country and the tremendous sacrifices they had made, and

WHEREAS, the lack of formal "Welcome Home" parades and other traditional celebrations for returning soldiers that were common in previous military conflicts in which the United States was engaged, coupled with verbal and sometimes physical abuse, resulted in great disillusionment, undeserved indignity, and often great suffering and anguish among returning Vietnam veterans, and

WHEREAS, many of these brave men and women are now reaching an advanced age, and

WHEREAS, on that date this nation will be presented with a unique and historic opportunity to hold appropriate observances and long-overdue recognition ceremonies that will honor our nation's aging Vietnam War veterans and that may finally provide these brave men and women a fitting expression of gratitude and a measure of healing and official closure that has been denied them for decades and that they so greatly deserve, and

WHEREAS, the importance of the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the end of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War and the opportunity that such an historical anniversary presents to attempt to rectify past injustices and ingratitude cannot be stressed strongly enough, and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and appropriate that the United States Congress initiate and support efforts at the national level to mark this historic anniversary and to attempt to redress the lack of appropriate recognition and undeserved ingratitude that so many of these brave servicemen and servicewomen received upon returning home, and

WHEREAS, as part of a national effort, it is also requested that the United States Congress authorize the minting of a 40th anniversary commemorative medal expressing the nation's appreciation for the honorable service of Vietnam veterans, and

WHEREAS, for this historic opportunity to be fully realized, the United States Congress should act promptly and decisively,...

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

None

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None

2. Expenditures:

None

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None

2. Expenditures:

None

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not Applicable

2. Other:

None

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

Not Applicable

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Amendment Passed in State Affairs, 04/12/11 – The amendment removes references to HB 829, a bill that is related to the memorial. It also adds the request to authorize the minting of a commemorative medal to the resolution portion of the memorial.