

**HB**

**67**

<TARGET><BILL>HB 67</BILL><SUBJECT>HB  
67</SUBJECT><COMM>HMLV28</COMM></TARGET>

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



**Session:**  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2186  
Phone (907) 465-3004  
Fax: (907) 465-2070  
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004

**Interim:**  
1292 Sadler Way  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: (907) 452-1088  
Fax: (907) 452-1146  
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004

## REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON

### Sponsor Statement HB 67

### **"An Act establishing March 29<sup>th</sup> of each year as Vietnam Veterans Day"**

In 2012, the United States Senate and the President designated March 29, as Vietnam Veterans Day. It marked the 38th anniversary of the withdrawal of U.S. combat and combat-support units from Vietnam.

On March 29, 1973, all U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam, marking an end of the 10 year United States military involvement. Upon their return, Vietnam Veterans were not greeted with parades or triumphant speeches such as the ones delivered at the end of each of the World Wars. Instead, Vietnam veterans returned home to silence, and in some cases, to abuse for having served their country during a controversial war.

House Bill 67 would dedicate March 29th of each year as Vietnam Veterans Day in Alaska to commemorate the military service of American men and women in Vietnam. The day may be observed by suitable observances and exercises by civic groups and the public.

I would appreciate your support for House Bill 67.

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## REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON

### HB 67 "Vietnam Veterans Day"

#### Why March 29<sup>th</sup> and instead of March 30<sup>th</sup>?

March 30<sup>th</sup> - day and month when the opposition on numerous occasions violated the Peace Treaty and continued to kill American men and women as well as US allies

- March 30, 1972 - NVA Eastertide attack across the DMZ and on Quang Tri
- March 30, 1975 - Da Nang falls

March 29<sup>th</sup>

- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1973 is identified with the official withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam ordered by President Nixon.
- March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1974 was established by President Nixon as Vietnam Veterans Day

## Proclamation 4270 - Vietnam Veterans Day

February 26, 1974

By the President of the United States Of America - **Richard Nixon**  
A Proclamation

As America enters its second year of peace after a decade of conflict, it is highly appropriate for us to acknowledge the debt we owe to those veterans who served in the Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia. The untiring devotion that characterized our Armed Forces during this trying conflict is a tribute to the national character.

There are over six and one-half million Vietnam-era veterans, of whom more than two and one-half million served in Vietnam. Despite significant disruptions in their lives and other personal sacrifices, they answered the call of their country and served with great distinction.

As a Nation, we have acknowledged our deep respect and admiration by setting aside March 29, 1974, as Vietnam Veterans Day to remember that the honorable peace America achieved came through great sacrifice. Those who served, those who gave their lives, those who were disabled, and those who are still missing in Southeast Asia--and whose full accounting we shall continue to seek--deserve the profound gratitude of their countrymen. For this purpose, the Congress has authorized and requested me to issue a proclamation designating March 29, 1974, as Vietnam Veterans Day.

*Now, Therefore, I, Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States of America, urge the people of this Nation to join in commemorating Friday, March 29, 1974, as Vietnam Veterans Day with suitable observances.*

I direct the appropriate officials of the Government to arrange for the display of the flag of the United States on all public buildings on that day; and I request officials of Federal, State, and local Governments, and civic and patriotic organizations, to give their enthusiastic support to appropriate ceremonies and observances throughout the Nation.

I urge all citizens of every age to participate in the events of this day as one means of honoring those men and women who served their country faithfully and courageously during the Vietnam conflict.

*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-eighth.



RICHARD NIXON

# The White House -President Barack Obama

The White House  
Office of the Press Secretary  
For Immediate Release  
March 29, 2012

## Presidential Proclamation -- Vietnam Veterans Day

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

On January 12, 1962, United States Army pilots lifted more than 1,000 South Vietnamese service members over jungle and underbrush to capture a National Liberation Front stronghold near Saigon. Operation Chopper marked America's first combat mission against the Viet Cong, and the beginning of one of our longest and most challenging wars. Through more than a decade of conflict that tested the fabric of our Nation, the service of our men and women in uniform stood true. Fifty years after that fateful mission, we honor the more than 3 million Americans who served, we pay tribute to those we have laid to rest, and we reaffirm our dedication to showing a generation of veterans the respect and support of a grateful Nation.

The Vietnam War is a story of service members of different backgrounds, colors, and creeds who came together to complete a daunting mission. It is a story of Americans from every corner of our Nation who left the warmth of family to serve the country they loved. It is a story of patriots who braved the line of fire, who cast themselves into harm's way to save a friend, who fought hour after hour, day after day to preserve the liberties we hold dear. From Ia Drang to Hue, they won every major battle of the war and upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

Eleven years of combat left their imprint on a generation. Thousands returned home bearing shrapnel and scars; still more were burdened by the invisible wounds of post-traumatic stress, of Agent Orange, of memories that would never fade. More than 58,000 laid down their lives in service to our Nation. Now and forever, their names are etched into two faces of black granite, a lasting memorial to those who bore conflict's greatest cost.

Our veterans answered our country's call and served with honor, and on March 29, 1973, the last of our troops left Vietnam. Yet, in one of the war's most profound tragedies, many of these men and women came home to be shunned or neglected -- to face treatment unbefitting their courage and a welcome unworthy of their example. We must never let this happen again. Today, we reaffirm one of our most fundamental obligations: to show all who have worn the uniform of the United States the respect and dignity they deserve, and to honor their sacrifice by serving them as well as they served us. Half a century after those helicopters swept off the ground and into the annals of history, we pay tribute to the fallen, the missing, the wounded, the millions who served, and the millions more who awaited their return. Our Nation stands stronger for their service, and on Vietnam Veterans Day, we honor their proud legacy with our deepest gratitude.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 29, 2012, as Vietnam Veterans Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Vietnam War.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 55

Expressing support for designation of a “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day”.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 16, 2011

Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. JOHANNIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

MARCH 7, 2011

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing support for designation of a “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day”.

Whereas the Vietnam War was fought in the Republic of South Vietnam from 1961 to 1975, and involved North Vietnamese regular forces and Viet Cong guerrilla forces in armed conflict with United States Armed Forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam;

Whereas the United States Armed Forces became involved in Vietnam because the United States Government wanted to provide direct military support to the Government of South Vietnam to defend itself against the growing Communist threat from North Vietnam;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam in 1961;

Whereas, as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2 and 4, 1964, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 88-408), on August 7, 1964, which provided the authority to the President of the United States to prosecute the war against North Vietnam;

Whereas, in 1965, United States Armed Forces ground combat units arrived in Vietnam;

Whereas, by the end of 1965, there were 80,000 United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969, a peak of approximately 543,000 troops was reached;

Whereas, on January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris was signed, which required the release of all United States prisoners-of-war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States Armed Forces from South Vietnam;

Whereas, on March 30, 1973, the United States Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat units and combat support units from South Vietnam;

Whereas, on April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese regular forces captured Saigon, the capitol of South Vietnam, effectively placing South Vietnam under Communist control;

Whereas more than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives in Vietnam and more than 300,000 members of the Armed Forces were wounded;

Whereas, in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in the District of Columbia to commemorate those

members of the United States Armed Forces who died or were declared missing-in-action in Vietnam;

Whereas the Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue among the people of the United States and a conflict that caused a generation of veterans to wait too long for the United States public to acknowledge and honor the efforts and services of such veterans;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were often wrongly criticized for the policy decisions made by 4 presidential administrations in the United States;

Whereas the establishment of a “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day” would be an appropriate way to honor those members of the United States Armed Forces who served in South Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War; and

Whereas March 30, 2011, would be an appropriate day to establish as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day”:  
Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) honors and recognizes the contributions of  
3       veterans who served in the United States Armed  
4       Forces in Vietnam during war and during peace;

5               (2) encourages States and local governments to  
6       also establish “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans  
7       Day”; and

1           (3) encourages the people of the United States  
2 to observe “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day”  
3 with appropriate ceremonies and activities that—

4           (A) provide the appreciation Vietnam War  
5 veterans deserve, but did not receive upon re-  
6 turning home from the war;

7           (B) demonstrate the resolve that never  
8 again shall the Nation disregard and denigrate  
9 a generation of veterans;

10          (C) promote awareness of the faithful serv-  
11 ice and contributions of such veterans during  
12 their military service as well as to their commu-  
13 nities since returning home;

14          (D) promote awareness of the importance  
15 of entire communities empowering veterans and  
16 the families of veterans to readjust to civilian  
17 life after military service; and

18          (E) promote opportunities for such vet-  
19 erans to assist younger veterans returning from  
20 the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in rehabilita-  
21 tion from wounds, both seen and unseen, and to  
22 support the reintegration of younger veterans  
23 into civilian life.

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