

## VIETNAM VETS MEMORIAL SITE

House Bill 5028 as enrolled  
Second Analysis (8-4-92)

Sponsor: Rep. Sal Rocca  
House Committee: Military & Veterans'  
Affairs  
Senate Committee: State Affairs &  
Military/Veterans' Affairs

### ***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

Earlier this session, the legislature passed House Bill 4730, which designated a site for a monument to Vietnam veterans from Michigan who were killed or are listed as missing in action because of the war. The 1988 act authorizing the memorial had simply said it was to be located "on state-owned land in the capital city." Governor Engler vetoed House Bill 4730, however, rejecting the site in the bill, directly west of the capitol dome and directly north of the Library of Michigan arch, because it was "in the middle of a parking lot." He recommended that the search for a suitable site continue so that a Vietnam memorial could be located in an area that could eventually grow to include a tribute to Michigan veterans of all wars. Supporters of the Vietnam memorial have proposed a new site they say is generally acceptable. Organizers of the memorial project plan a national design competition and hope to have the winner announced on Veterans' Day of 1992. For design proposals to be submitted (and for fundraising to be successful), a specific site should be designated for the memorial.

### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend the Michigan Vietnam Veterans Memorial Act to designate a site for a memorial monument. The monument would be located on a state-owned site of not more than one acre that is: a) directly west of the peak of the capitol dome; and b) midway between Allegan Street and Ottawa Street. The bill also contains a more precise technical description of the site within which the monument would stand (near Logan Street/Martin Luther King Boulevard).

The bill is tie-barred to Senate Bill 704 and House Bill 4995, both of which are now public acts. Senate Bill 704 amends the Michigan Vietnam Veterans Memorial Act to require that any interest

earned on the money in the memorial monument fund be credited to the fund and to specify how money could be used. (These provisions were in an earlier version of House Bill 5028.) House Bill 4995 amends the Management and Budget Act to designate a certain portion of land within the Michigan Capitol Park as the Michigan Veterans' Memorial Park. The same technical description is used as found in House Bill 5028 for the larger site within which the Vietnam memorial would stand.

MCL 35.1053 et al.

### ***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

Public Act 306 of 1988 amended the Management and Budget Act to create a Capitol Park Commission and to describe the site of the Michigan Capitol Park. It said the park would consist of all real property owned by the state located in downtown Lansing and bounded by Ottawa Street on the north, Allegan Street on the south, the vacated portion of Sycamore Street between Ottawa and Allegan on the east, and Logan Street (now also Martin Luther King Boulevard) on the west. Plans for the development of this park (and of a 4,500-space parking ramp to replace the surface parking that now occupies the east end of the park site) are in abeyance. The veterans' memorial site proposed in this bill would be at the west end of the capitol park site. House Bill 4995 would amend the Management and Budget Act to designate certain western portions of the capitol park area Veterans Memorial Park.

### ***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

A spokesperson from the Michigan Veterans' Trust Fund has said the bill has no fiscal implications for the state. (3-6-92)

House Bill 5028 (8-4-92)

**ARGUMENTS:*****For:***

Supporters of the construction of a memorial to U.S. military veterans who died or are missing in action as a result of the war in Vietnam say it is important to designate a specific site for the memorial in order to hold a national design competition for the memorial and, subsequently, to encourage contributions to the memorial fund. The site itself will be integral to any design proposal, say planners. An earlier site was vetoed by Governor Engler, and the site in this bill is considered politically feasible, as well as acceptable to veterans' groups.

***Against:***

A representative of the Capitol Park Commission expressed reservations about the proposed site in committee testimony. A preferable site, he said, would be at the east end of the proposed capitol park, immediately west of the Ottawa Tower office buildings. That would be more consistent with plans for a larger capitol park complex in the area and with plans to create additional veterans' memorials. No specific plans yet exist for the larger capitol park complex or for a veterans' park within it, so it is premature to select a site for the Vietnam memorial.

***Response:***

A specific site is needed soon for planning to continue. The site closer to Ottawa Towers is close to that vetoed by Governor Engler and is not considered feasible at this time.

***Against:***

When the act authorizing a memorial passed in 1988, some people questioned the need for a separate, additional Vietnam monument because there is already a memorial to American men and women who served in wartime on the grounds of the capitol.