

Bill authorizing WWI memorial advances in House

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A House committee approved a bill on Wednesday to establish a World War I memorial in the District — a plan that has faced controversy despite its noble goal of honoring those who served in the Great War.

Rep. Ted Poe submitted a revised version of the bill in September, after D.C. leaders objected to an initial plan to "nationalize" the District of Columbia War Memorial that is dedicated to city residents who fought and died in the overseas conflict from 1914 to 1918. The bill seeks an exemption to a 2003 law that prohibits new commemorative works on a key cross-section of the National Mall.

Mr. Poe has recommended a site in Constitution Gardens, located north of the reflecting pool near the Vietnam War Memorial, where munitions and administration buildings once stood to assist American efforts during World War I. Federal funds cannot be used to build the memorial, and its private cost may not exceed \$10 million, according to the bill.

The National World War I Memorial Foundation and other proponents of the bill say it is important to honor the Great War on the Mall alongside other notable foreign wars of the 20th century.

The House Natural Resources Committee forwarded Mr. Poe's legislation to the full House at a markup session on Wednesday, amending the maximum size of the memorial from 1.5 acres to half of an acre and specifying that, while the memorial can be built on the Mall, it does not have to be placed in Constitution Gardens.

Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District's non-voting member of Congress, is among seven cosponsors of the revised bill.

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