



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.

H.R. 2773: To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to sell Pershing Hall

Background:

Located in Paris, France, Pershing Hall was purchased by The American Legion in 1918 to serve as a memorial building for the Allied Expeditionary Forces. In 1991, Congress enacted P.L. 102-86 (as amended by P.L. 103-79) to transfer the ownership of Pershing Hall to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to use as a memorial. The law authorized VA to enhance the value of Pershing Hall by leasing it to a lessee for renovation contingent upon the lessee maintaining certain commemorative and decorative elements.

In 1998, VA signed a 99-year enhanced use lease with the current lessee who has operated a 5-star boutique hotel, restaurant and club in Pershing Hall since 2001. Under the current lease agreement, which will expire in 2097, the lessee is required to provide free meeting space for the VA for 50 people three times per year, each time not to exceed one day.

H.R. 2773 would amend the Veterans' Benefits Programs Improvement Act of 1991 to direct VA to sell Pershing Hall, in Paris, France, for fair market value, on the condition that the purchaser agrees to preserve its interior and exterior architectural details. It would also require that the funds received from the sale of Pershing Hall be transferred to the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and made available for maintaining cemeteries, monuments and memorials under ABMC's jurisdiction.

The Message:

- This bill would direct VA to sell Pershing Hall in Paris, France, under the condition that the purchaser maintain the building's architectural details.
- All funds received from the sale of Pershing Hall would go towards the future maintenance of cemeteries, monuments and memorials.