

HOUSE PASSES LARSON'S SECOND BILL

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HOUSE PASSES LARSON'S SECOND BILL WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) announced today that the House of Representatives has passed H.R. 4794, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000 by a voice vote. This is the second bill that was introduced by Larson that the House has passed.

The legislation will commission the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the 600-mile route that the troops of George Washington and French General Rochambeau traveled together to fight the British in Yorktown, Virginia, including the 11 sites in Connecticut where the French army camped. The study would identify the route's relationship to the American Revolutionary War, and how it can best be preserved.

Larson became involved in the preservation of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in February at the request of a constituent from Bolton, Hans DePold, who is the Bolton Town Historian. DePold asked Larson to take the lead in Congress on obtaining support for the preservation project from Members of Congress in other states along the route.

"This is a great day for Connecticut," said Larson. "Our state is rich in history and tradition and it is an honor to take part in preserving an important part of the Revolutionary War, especially one that is so strongly tied to our state. Certainly, a great deal of the credit for this preservation project must go to Bolton Town Historian, Hans DePold, who first brought his efforts to my attention in April. It is through preservation and commemoration that we can ensure future generations will not forget the legacy of General Washington and General Rochambeau. And as a former High School history teacher, I am particularly pleased with today's vote."

The entire 600-mile route travels through Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia.

During the American Revolutionary battle of 1780, George Washington's army dwindled to less than 3,000 men and desperately needed assistance. Fortunately, 5,000 troops from the French expeditionary army landed in Newport, Rhode Island, led by General Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, to assist General Washington.

In July, after Larson introduced the legislation, the French Ambassador to the United States, Francois Bujon de l'Estang sent a letter of thanks to Larson for his legislative initiative and commended him for "paving the way to a proper commemoration of an important page of the shared history of our nations."

Also in July, Larson held a press conference at the Webb Deane Stevens Museum on Main Street in Wethersfield, which was the location of one of the final meetings that Washington and Rochambeau had before traveling to Yorktown. Joining Larson that day were representatives of the Connecticut Historical Commission, the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Committee, and the Sons of the American Revolution.

The ultimate goal of the Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution is to have the route added to the National Park Service registry of historic places in time for the 225th anniversary of Washington and Rochambeau's march to Yorktown, which was the decisive battle in the American Revolution.

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