

# Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman  
Hearing Memorandum

September 4, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **H.R. 6118 (Rep. David Rouzer)**, To direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an "American World War II Heritage City", and for other purposes.  
**September 6, 2018, 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building**

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## **Summary of the Bill**

H.R. 6118, introduced by Representative David Rouzer (R-NC-7), directs the Secretary of the Interior to designate at least one city in the United States each year as an "American World War II City" based on: (1) contributions to the war effort during World War II; and (2) efforts to preserve the history of such contributions, including preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition of World War II veterans. The bill designates Wilmington, North Carolina, as the first such city.

## **Witnesses**

*The Honorable David Rouzer*  
Member of Congress, North Carolina's 7th District

*Mr. Wilbur D. Jones, Jr.*  
World War II Wilmington Home Front Heritage Coalition  
Wilmington, NC

## **Background**

On December 7, 1941, military forces of the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Fleet and ground bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.<sup>1</sup> On December 8, 1941, one day after what President Roosevelt referred to as, "a date which will live in infamy," the United States declared war against the Empire of Japan.<sup>2</sup> Three days later, on December 11, 1941, Japan's ally, Germany, declared war on the United States.<sup>3</sup> Sixteen million Americans, mostly young

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<sup>1</sup> "The WWII Home Front." National Parks Service. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-wwii-home-front.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

working age men, served in the military during World War II, out of an overall United States population of 113 million.<sup>4</sup>

While an unprecedented number of young men served in World War II, the country drastically increased its war production on the home front, serving not only the needs of the armed forces of the United States but her allies as well - what President Franklin Roosevelt called "The Arsenal of Democracy".<sup>5</sup> The combination of millions serving in the military, during a period of necessary and drastic increases in production, led to significant social changes on the American Home Front.<sup>6</sup>

The World War II period resulted in the largest number of people migrating within the United States, in the history of the country. Individuals and families relocated to industrial centers for good paying jobs, and out of a sense of patriotic duty. Many industrial centers became "boomtowns," growing at phenomenal rates. One example, the City of Richmond, California, grew from a population of under 24,000 to over 100,000 during the war.<sup>7</sup>

Another boomtown was the City of Wilmington, North Carolina. During World War II, Wilmington was called "The Defense Capital of the State".<sup>8</sup> Wilmington's largest employer, the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company constructed 243 cargo vessels.<sup>9</sup> Wilmington was also home to many strategic defense industries including: fertilizer plants, pulpwood and creosote factories, dairies, and concrete floating drydock manufacturing. Wilmington was also the site of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad headquarters and a P-47 fighter plane training area.<sup>10</sup> The city and its surrounding area hosted training for all five military branches and the city's population more than doubled with the influx of military personnel forcing everyone to cope with a strain on housing, schools, transportation, the food supply, medical and social services.<sup>11</sup>

Workers faced many challenges, as working conditions were difficult and dangerous. Between the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 and the D-Day Invasion of Europe in June of 1944, there were more home front industrial casualties than military casualties. The high number of industrial casualties led to improved work place safety and regulations.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to home front workers, everyone was expected to be an active participant in the war effort. Rationing was a way of life as twenty commodities were rationed and people were asked to, "Use it up – Wear it out – Make it do – or Do without."<sup>13</sup> Materials vital to the war effort were collected, often by youth groups, and recycled. Many Americans supported the war

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> "Meet America's World War II City." City of Wilmington, NC. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/community-services/world-war-ii-city>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> "The WWII Home Front." National Parks Service. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-wwii-home-front.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

effort by purchasing war bonds. Women replaced men in sports leagues, orchestras, and community institutions. Americans grew 60% of the produce they consumed in “Victory Gardens”.<sup>14</sup> The war effort on the United States Home Front was a total effort.<sup>15</sup>

In recognition of the industrial, governmental, and citizen efforts that eventually led the United States to victory in World War II, Congress designated the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park in October of 2000.<sup>16</sup> The historical park includes sites, structures, and areas of Richmond, California, that are associated with the home front efforts. Richmond, California, was chosen as the site for this National Historical Park because of the city’s many surviving sites and structures that help tell the diverse stories of the home front.<sup>17</sup>

H.R. 6118 would provide further commemoration of the World War II home front efforts by requiring the Secretary of the Interior to designate at least one city in the United States each year as an “American World War II Heritage City.” Moreover, the bill requires that Wilmington, North Carolina be the first city to receive such designation.

### **Major Provisions of H.R. 6118**

- Requires the Secretary to designate at least one city each year and prohibits the Secretary from designating more than one city in each State or territory.
- Requires the Secretary to establish and publicize the process by which a city may apply for designation and requires the Secretary to encourage cities to apply for such designation.
- Requires that the Secretary consult with the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution or the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in selecting designations.
- Requires that Wilmington, North Carolina, be designated as the first American World War II Heritage City.

### **Cost**

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

### **Administration Position**

The Administration’s position is currently unknown.

### **Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)**

None.

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<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> Public Law 106-352

<sup>17</sup> Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park. Accessed September 30, 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/rori/learn/historyculture/places.htm>.