

**Statement of Representative Mike Bost  
House Natural Resources Committee Member Day Hearing  
May 6, 2021**

Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

Thank you for the opportunity today to testify on my bill that would establish the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historic Park.

Southern Illinois is home to one of American history's great civilizations.

Its center was at Cahokia, and it was once the largest civilization in today's United States.

By 1200 A.D., the community numbered 10,000 to 20,000 strong.

What remains today are the Cahokia Mounds, a 2,200 acre site with more than 70 earth mounds, upon which many of their buildings once stood.

This treasure is visited by schools, families, and history fans alike. It's a critical part of our history.

That's why I introduced a bill to make Cahokia Mounds a national park with my colleague Cori Bush.

The bill would help preserve this amazing piece of history for generations to come.

The process to develop this legislation was long and comprehensive.

The Heartlands Conservancy based in my district has undertaken a great effort to study the site for inclusion as a unit of the park service. This includes basing the legislation on criteria the National Park Service would use in conducting a Special Resources Study.

The National Park Service itself appears to recognize the great importance of the Cahokia Mounds. In addition, the Mounds are one of the few sites in the United States recognized as a United Nations world heritage site.

In short, the site's importance is well recognized already and any recommendations to pursue a full Special Resources Study would lead to unnecessary duplication, cost, and delay.

While I can appreciate my colleagues desire to follow certain procedures, I encourage them to recognize both the uniqueness of the Cahokia Mounds to the early history of our nation.

And to recognize the work that has already been completed to make it a unit of National Park Service.

Thank you again for holding this hearing. I yield back my time.