

**STATEMENT OF CAM SHOLLY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, VISITOR AND
RESOURCE PROTECTION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND
ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION, OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 1497, TO AMEND TITLE 36, UNITED STATES
CODE, TO ENSURE THAT MEMORIALS COMMEMORATING THE SERVICE OF
THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES MAY CONTAIN RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

JUNE 6, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1497, to amend title 36, United States Code, to ensure that memorials commemorating the service of the United States Armed Forces may contain religious symbols, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1497 would amend chapter 21 of title 36, United States Code, to allow religious symbols to be included as part of either a military memorial that is established or acquired by the United States Government, or a military memorial not established by the United States Government, but for which the American Battle Monuments Commission (Commission) cooperated in the establishment of the memorial. H.R. 1497 also defines a military memorial as a memorial or monument commemorating the service of the United States Armed Forces, including works of architecture and art.

The National Park Service administers those military memorials located on parkland in the District of Columbia, some of which were established under the Commemorative Works Act, and those war memorials within parks in other parts of the country. It is our honor and privilege to manage and interpret these memorials. Concerning the effects of this legislation, the Department defers to the Commission for a position on H.R. 1497 to the extent it involves memorials administered by the Commission or for which the Commission cooperated in the establishment. Next, H.R. 1497 may also affect memorials administered by the Department of Defense which should have the opportunity to offer its views. Finally, the Department defers to the Department of Justice as to any potential First Amendment questions raised by H.R. 1497.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions you or any other members of the subcommittee may have.