

JEC Hearing Testimony before
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
Re. H.R. 1286: Southern Campaign of the Revolution National
Heritage Corridor Act of 2021

(5 minutes)

June 15 at 1pm

Mr. Chairman, other Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to be a part of today's hearing.

I recognize the significance of the many programs and initiatives that fall within your jurisdiction. As someone who studies history every day, I am also aware of the tremendously positive impact this Committee's work has on our country and the preservation of American history. As President Harry Truman once said, "The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know."

I welcome this opportunity to testify in support of legislation I have introduced to provide a more robust appreciation of the Southern Campaign of the American Revolutionary War.

The American victory at Kings Mountain in South Carolina was once described by a British Commander as "the first link in a chain of evils that ended in the total loss of America."

Mr. Chairman, when we hear the story of the American Revolution, we don't often learn of the war's Southern Campaign or applaud the dramatic

impact it had on the Revolution. Significant American victories in the Carolinas between 1775 and 1783, such as at Kings Mountain and at Guilford Courthouse, paved the way for America's final victory in the war for independence.

The legislation we are discussing here today, seeks to tell this under-recognized story and acknowledge the enduring significance of the Southern Campaign on our nation's history by establishing the Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Corridor.

In 2014, the National Park Service conducted a National Heritage Area Suitability/Feasibility study which concluded that the military events in the Carolinas substantially influenced the eventual American victory in the Revolution.

The study also found that the American victory in the Revolution foretold momentous changes for American Indians and African Americans in the Carolina. The British and American armies promised enslaved African Americans their freedom to enlist. Black soldiers fought in integrated combat units in a number of backcountry locations during the Southern Campaign. Most African Americans who could document their service to the American army would indeed earn their freedom at the end of the war. African American soldiers would not be provided the standard of liberty enjoyed by these soldiers until 200 years later when the American military was officially integrated.

This bill reflects the input of communities across South Carolina and North Carolina who expressed unanimous support for the creation of this National Heritage Area. I am honored the entire South Carolina Congressional delegation has co-sponsored this bill. This legislation was initially proposed by South Carolina Congressman John Spratt, and I am pleased to see this legislation finally making progress on its way to House passage.

I commend the American Battlefield Trust for their help informing this process and the University of South Carolina for its willingness to serve as the Management Entity for this Heritage corridor.

It is a personal mission of mine to increase public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historical, scenic, and cultural resources associated with the Southern Campaign. It is my hope that the creation of this Heritage Corridor will also draw visitors to battlefields and historical landmarks located in communities across the Carolinas that are rich in history.

For over a decade, Congress and the National Park Service have worked towards creating this Heritage Corridor in the Carolinas. It is long past time to make this a reality.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in today's proceedings, and I will answer any questions you may have.

JEC Introduction of American Battlefield Trust Witness: 30 seconds

It is my pleasure to introduce Douglas W. Bostick.

Mr. Bostick, a native of James Island, South Carolina, serves as the Executive Director & CEO of the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust, a land trust that protects and preserves historic military sites. In this role, he also serves as Director of the South Carolina Liberty Trail, a state-wide initiative to preserve Revolutionary War battlefields in South Carolina. Mr. Bostick has negotiated and supervised the preservation of fourteen Revolutionary War battlefields in South Carolina. He is also the author of 26 books, all non-fiction history, and his knowledge of history is enhanced by a gift for storytelling.

Thank you for being here with us today Mr. Bostick.