

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. It's 3:43 in the morning here in Guam, I just got off a 19-hour flight, it's only been a little over six hours since I got off the plane, and I have to be at a change-of-command ceremony in about another six hours. We're really burning the midnight oil out here, but we're doing so because the work of the committee and the work being done here is of utmost importance to this country. What we are doing here, and what we are discussing here with these various national heritage areas—we're talking about how we're going to preserve and promote what makes America special.

For me, and for my end here, we have our particular bill, H.R. 2889 that is seeking to conduct a national heritage area study out here in the territory of Guam. As I listen to all the testimony that was previously discussed from our Ranking Member, the respectable Representative Fulcher, who mentioned in 1984 that this was when the first National Heritage Area was established—that was 37 years ago, my fellow territorial colleague mentioned that they had their study done in the US Virgin Islands in 2006—that was 15 years ago; and here we are, Guam has not had a National Heritage area study and I'm humbly asking this committee and my colleagues to please support my bill so that we may finally have one done.

The reason why we are seeking to have one done is because we have so much significance in the American story out here in Guam, and we want to be able to tell that story to the American people. We also want to be able to tell that story to our all of our visitors and neighbors out here in Asia.

On Guam, we have over 11 miles of Pacific Ocean, coral reef gardens that are nowhere else to be found in this country. On Guam, we have over 26 hectares of rainforest that is a very rare natural occurrence in the United States. We have the oldest society of Austronesians migration out here on Guam with the ancient Chamorro people. The story of the indigenous people on Guam that is just underrepresented in this country. Guam was also occupied by the Spanish since 1521. This is our 500th anniversary of colonialism on Guam going all the way back to Spanish times in 1521—that story is not told. We have “rubens” of Spanish bridges, Spanish palaces, and Spanish facilities out here that are not receiving the support that really should be received for something of such historical significance to this country, especially because Guam was a territory that became a part of the United States as a result of the Spanish American War in 1898. We also have pretty significant history in World War II, with Guam being the only American soil that was actually occupied by the Japanese. We have so many historic sites out here as a result of their occupation. The *Manenggon* Death march that saw the death of thousands of Chamorro people, we lost 14,000 Chamorros, a very significant number of Americans who died in these death marches that is very underrepresented in this country. Guam also happens to have a piece of WWI history as well with the sinking of the *Cormoran* in our waters out here just off the coast, and very interestingly, the sinking of the *Cormoran* in WWI and the sinking of the *Tokai Maru* in WWII—you literally can dive that site, and touch both sunken vessels—the only place you can do that in the world where you can do that for both WWI and WWII.

There are so many stories to be told Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, There's so much significance out here in our pacific island territory and all we're asking for is that is we do our duty to study these things so we can properly recognize them as national heritage areas. That is what we are looking to do with H.R. 2889.

I humbly ask my colleagues to please move this legislation forward. Let's get this study done, and let's recognize the incredibly significant ecological, environmental, and historical components of our American history. Thank you so much Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.