

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Matt Rosendale
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1117, H.R. 3525, and H.R. 5230

December 7, 2021

Today, the Subcommittee meets to discuss three proposals related to national parks and museums for our last hearing of 2021. While each of these proposals is worthy of Committee consideration, I find the timing and composition of this hearing highly questionable.

As the prices of everyday household goods continues to increase and supply chain issues threaten our economy and even Christmas, I fail to understand why our Democrat colleagues are focused on bills to create a new Smithsonian and expand an existing park unit that are completely unrelated to addressing the pressing problems Americans are facing.

Due to President Biden's overregulation and overspending, Americans are not only worried about what's going to be under the tree this year, but whether they'll be able to find a tree at all! Inflation is rising at the highest rate in over 30 years, with gas prices over 50 percent higher than last year and food prices 5 percent higher. The backlog of ships waiting to unload cargo off the coast of California reached a record 114 vessels last month, compared to a historic backlog of just 17 ships prior to the pandemic. Main Street businesses all across Montana are hanging "Help Wanted" signs in their windows during a devastating labor crisis, which will only be exacerbated by President Biden's recent vaccine mandate.

That's why, later this week, Committee Republicans will be hosting our own forum to address the issues affecting the pocketbooks of millions of American families ahead of the holiday season. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle

appear okay with ending this year on a whimper, but Republicans are full steam ahead to make sure we are doing everything we can to serve the American people.

With that being said, there is one bill I'd like to highlight that is worthy of our time today, which is the "National September 11 Memorial and Museum Act," sponsored by Representative Katko of New York. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the attacks of September 11th. The National 9/11 Memorial and Museum, located in New York City, is the principal tribute of remembrance and honor to the nearly 3,000 people killed in the terror attacks at the World Trade Center site on September 11, 2001, as well as the six people killed in the World Trade Center bombing in February 1993.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has been financially devastating for the Museum, which suffered a 95 percent revenue loss in 2020. Representative Katko's bill provides a

one-time grant ranging between 5 to 10 million dollars from the Department of Homeland Security to help the 9/11 Memorial and Museum with its high security costs, which have not gone away during the pandemic.

We are privileged to have Ms. Debra Burlingame with us today. Ms. Burlingame is the sister of Captain Charles F. "Chic" Burlingame, III, pilot of American Airlines Flight 77, which was hijacked and crashed into the Pentagon. Chic was a 25-year veteran of the Navy, who honorably served his country until his final moments.

As Ms. Burlingame stated in her written testimony, "No reflection about 9/11 and the nation's response to that day is complete without recognition of the commitment, accomplishments, and heroic sacrifices of our military. Whether in the mountains of Afghanistan or the sands of Iraq, they have refused to flinch in the face of a brutal enemy."

In light of the Biden administration's disastrous withdrawal in Afghanistan earlier this summer, I believe consideration of this bill is more appropriate than ever to remind folks of why we were there in the first place, and why we will never forget the courageous sacrifices made by military members and their families.

With that, I want to thank the witnesses for appearing here today, I look forward to your testimony, and I yield back the balance of my time.