

Testimony

H.R. 2717, the *Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act*
Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT)

Thank you, Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have today to testify in support of H.R. 2717, the *Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act*, which I introduced with my friend Congressman Veasey.

This important bill builds upon an effort we initiated last Congress to build a monument in Washington, D.C., to honor those who have received the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest honor. This bill passed with unanimous support and was signed into law, which set the stage for our new effort to authorize a specific location for this monument on the Reserve.

I believe this is a sacred effort. As Congressman Veasey and I have written, our hope is that this monument will stand as a testament to those who fought to safeguard freedom and democracy. It is fitting, then, for this bill and this effort to be named after a great American hero, Hershel "Woody" Williams, who passed away last year and who was the last Medal of Honor recipient from World War II.

I was honored to pay my respects when he laid in honor in the rotunda last year.

I understand several of his family members are here with us today. We are grateful for his legacy, which uplifts, inspires, and energizes

us here today. I am confident you have inherited these honorable traits from him.

The first Medal of Honor was awarded in 1863, and each recipient since then has been regarded as some of the greatest heroes our nation has to offer. Their stories remind our nation of the immense sacrifices put forth for the protection of the liberties that we all enjoy today.

Are we giving these heroes the recognition they deserve? Is enough light shed on their memory to ensure the survival of their legacy?

A poll conducted this year by the Medal of Honor Foundation found that a staggering 71% of Americans believe there is not enough focus on values and character traits in American society today.

This lack of emphasis on essential values, coupled with a shortage of positive role models, poses significant challenges for our children today. We want them to understand and embrace the principles that make our country honorable.

Clearly, now is the time to act to reemphasize the most admirable traits of our nation and establish concrete reminders of those who wholly embodied those traits.

H.R. 2717, which we are here to discuss today, will authorize the creation of this important monument within the Reserve.

The National Mall is renowned as our global stage, and it offers a space to learn, commemorate, and celebrate our nation's rich cultural heritage. It is only fitting that this monument be situated near the Lincoln Memorial, paying tribute to the President who

established the Medal of Honor and embodied its fundamental principles.

Since its creation, 3,516 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of all Department of Defense services. The award is given sparingly by our Commander in Chief to those whose personal bravery or self-sacrifice extend above and beyond their call of duty.

Only 65 of the recipients of the award are alive today. As we tell their stories, we learn about each other, about our nation, and about our potential as Americans.

The intentions of this bipartisan legislation are rooted in unity, remembrance, and celebration.

Now, more than ever, it is crucial for us to reconnect with our national roots and create a monument in the heart of our democracy that will serve as a powerful symbol of our enduring gratitude and admiration for our nation's brave and selfless defenders.

Thank you again, Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse, for this opportunity. I yield back.