

**H.R. 386; H.R. 1318; H.R. 2717; H.R. 3448;
AND H.R. 4377**

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H.R. 386, TO PROVIDE THAT NO FEDERAL FUNDS SHALL BE USED TO ALTER, CHANGE, DESTROY, OR REMOVE, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, ANY NAME, FACE, OR OTHER FEATURE ON THE MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL, "MOUNT RUSHMORE PROTECTION ACT"; H.R. 1318, TO AUTHORIZE THE LOCATION OF A MONUMENT ON THE NATIONAL MALL TO COMMEMORATE AND HONOR THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT AND THE PASSAGE OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, "WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT LOCATION ACT"; H.R. 2717, TO AUTHORIZE THE NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM FOUNDATION TO ESTABLISH A COMMEMORATIVE WORK ON THE NATIONAL MALL TO HONOR THE EXTRAORDINARY ACTS OF VALOR, SELFLESS SERVICE, AND SACRIFICE DISPLAYED BY MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS, "HERSHEL 'WOODY' WILLIAMS NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MONUMENT LOCATION ACT"; H.R. 3448, TO AMEND CHAPTER 3081 OF TITLE 54, UNITED STATES CODE, TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF AMERICA'S BATTLEFIELDS, "AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT ACT"; AND H.R. 4377, TO AMEND THE MILITARY LANDS WITHDRAWAL ACT OF 1999 WITH RESPECT TO EXTENSIONS, ADDITIONS, AND REVISIONS TO THE BARRY M. GOLDWATER RANGE IN ARIZONA

Thursday, July 13, 2023
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Tom Tiffany [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Tiffany, Fulcher, Stauber, Kiggans, Westerman; Kamlager-Dove, and Grijalva.

Also present: Representatives Moore of Utah, Hunt, Johnson of South Dakota, and Stefanik.

Mr. TIFFANY. The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will come to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess of the Subcommittee at any time.

The Subcommittee is meeting today to consider five bills: H.R. 386, Representative Johnson's South Dakota's Mount Rushmore Protection Act; H.R. 1318, Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act by Ranking Member Neguse; H.R. 2717, Representative Moore of Utah's Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act; H.R. 3448, Representative

Stefanik's American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act; and H.R. 4377, from Ranking Member Grijalva.

I ask unanimous consent that the following Members be allowed to participate in today's hearing from the dais: the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Hunt; the gentlewoman from New York, Ms. Stefanik; the gentleman from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson; and the gentleman from Utah, Mr. Moore.

Without objection, so ordered.

Under Committee Rule 4(f), any oral opening statements at hearings are limited to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member. I therefore ask unanimous consent that all other Members' opening statements be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted in accordance with Committee Rule 3(o).

Without objection, so ordered.

I will now recognize myself for an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. TOM TIFFANY, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN**

Mr. TIFFANY. Earlier this month, we celebrated our country's independence with the Fourth of July. Today, we continue to celebrate America by considering five bills to honor Americans, commemorate the history of our great country, and ensure our national security for years to come.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of America, Natural Resources Committee Republicans will celebrate our nation this Congress by highlighting the multitude of stories that have intertwined throughout our rich history to form the fabric of our nation. Much of that history would not be possible without the solemn sacrifices made by our nation's military and veterans. That is why we are considering H.R. 2717 today, which would honor the legacy of veterans who have demonstrated unparalleled heroism, and ensure their sacrifices are remembered for generations to come.

The Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act, sponsored by Representative Moore of Utah, would authorize the location of the National Medal of Honor Memorial in a prominent location on the National Mall, here in DC. The Medal of Honor is our nation's highest medal for valor in combat. Over 3,500 Medals of Honor have been awarded since its inception in 1861.

This year marks the 160th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln awarding the first Medal of Honor in the midst of the Civil War. There are only 65 living recipients of the Medal of Honor, including Master Chief Special Warfare Operator Britt Slabinski, who is testifying today.

Master Chief Slabinski, thank you for your service and for being here today.

H.R. 3448, the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act, sponsored by Representative Stefanik, would also honor our nation's earliest military history by making several improvements to the American Battlefield Protection program. Our nation's battlefields are hallowed sites showcasing the sacrifice and struggle, trials and triumphs that shaped our great nation, from the American Revolution to the Civil War.

Unfortunately, despite the rich history of these locations, many hallowed grounds have been lost or destroyed throughout the past centuries. In fact, the American Battlefield Trust estimates that our nation loses one acre of hallowed ground every hour. Representative Stefanik's legislation would strengthen our country's flagship program for protecting these sites so that we don't lose any more important pieces of our history.

Our great nation would be nothing without our Constitution and our first presidents who helped forge our young country at its outset. The Mount Rushmore Protection Act, led by Representative Johnson of South Dakota, would protect this shrine of democracy sculpture carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore. This unique sculpture commemorates the beginnings of our country by honoring the founding growth and perseverance of the United States of America.

In addition to honoring our past, the sculpture housed within roughly 1,300 acres administered by the National Park Service provides immense outdoor, recreational, and economic opportunities, attracting over 2 million visitors a year.

It is important to recognize that America, like any nation, has an imperfect past. Slavery was not abolished until 1865. Women were not always allowed to vote. Our National Park System helps us learn about and from the seminal events in our history. That is why I would like to thank Ranking Member Neguse and Congresswoman Lesko for introducing the bipartisan Women's Suffrage National Monument to be placed on the National Mall.

Like the Medal of Honor Memorial, this important monument deserves a permanent home in the most prominent location in our nation's capital. The consideration of this bill is particularly timely, as today marks the 175th anniversary of the start of the women's suffrage movement.

I am honored that my home state of Wisconsin played a pivotal role in this history of this movement, because it became the first state in the nation to ratify the 19th Amendment. Thank you to my daughters, my three daughters, that they are able to vote.

Finally, we will be considering important legislation to ensure the Air Force and Navy's continued use of the Barry M. Goldwater Range. Ranking Member Grijalva's legislation would enhance the security and safety of flight operations at the base, which is a critical training ground for our nation's top pilots. This Committee is committed to working with the Air Force to address their critical needs at the Goldwater Range in Arizona, as well as other bases in the West.

I would like to thank all the Members for their leadership on the important bills before us today.

I also want to thank all the witnesses for being here and traveling long distances to provide your expert testimony. Your work allows us to celebrate, honor, and protect veterans, heroic Americans, and this great country we all call home. I look forward to hearing from each of you.

With that, I would like to recognize the Chairman of the Full Natural Resources Committee, Mr. Westerman, for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany, for holding this hearing today on the bills to celebrate America's past, present, and our future. And I couldn't think of a better time to hold this hearing, considering that this year marks the 160th anniversary of the awarding of the first Medal of Honor, and today is also the 175th anniversary of the start of the women's suffrage movement. So, it is a very fitting time to be having hearings on these bills.

I welcome all the witnesses that will be here today.

Earlier this morning, I participated in an event called Ruck the Reserve, which honors the brave men and women who have fought in the global war on terrorism. Our ruck began at the Lincoln Memorial and ended at the future site of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial, which I was proud to support last Congress. And once completed, this memorial will serve as a lasting tribute on the National Mall so we never forget the sacrifices that our veterans made to keep our nation safe from terrorism.

It is not lost on me that just a few short years ago the National Park Service was testifying before Congress in opposition to locating this very monument on the National Mall, much like they are today for the Medal of Honor and the Women's Suffrage Memorial monuments.

In a world where we hear lots of buzz words like "diversity" and "inclusion," it is pretty rich that those concepts apparently don't extend to the inclusion of new memorials in the most prominent location in our nation's capital.

We also hear about support for our tribal community. We hear about supporting tribal sovereignty. But as we will discuss in a hearing later today, the Navajo were ignored when it came to the Chaco Canyon withdrawal. This is disappointing. But at this hearing we are having a hearing to put actions behind our words, and to actually do what we claim that we want to do. And these memorials that we are talking about, the actions that we will take today and future actions, I think, will show that there are more than just empty words in Congress.

Millions of Americans and visitors from across the world travel every year to our nation's capital to learn about the history of our great nation. The monuments and memorials located on the National Mall are the centerpiece of this history. And including new memorials honoring the legacy of the women's suffrage movement and the most courageous acts of valor recognized by our country, I believe, are very appropriate.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this Committee on both sides of the aisle to ensure our National Mall reflects these important aspects of our American history.

I am also proud to support a bill introduced by my friend and colleague, Elise Stefanik, the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act. This important legislation will improve upon the successes of this vital program and extend protections to pivotal battlefields across the nation.

Battlefields remind us of our storied, complex history. They also provide a way to honor those who fought and whose lives were lost.

Most importantly, they not only serve as a way to look into the past, but also to look into the future. The American Battlefield Protection Program has already successfully protected several battlefields in my home state of Arkansas, including the Prairie Grove Battlefield. And Congresswoman Stefanik's Bill would extend this program to also include sites protected by state or local agencies. This would benefit another battlefield in my district, the Jenkins Ferry State Park.

Jenkins Ferry is one of three battlefields in south central Arkansas that make up the Red River Campaign National Historic Landmark. In 1864, Confederate soldiers attacked the Union Army during the Battle of Jenkins Ferry. Union soldiers were able to retreat using a ferry site that still exists within the park today. Jenkins Ferry State Park also features many interpretive sites and memorials to soldiers who lost their lives during the Battle of Jenkins Ferry.

I look forward to considering the legislation that is before us today, as well as other pieces of legislation that are on the docket. I would like to thank the witnesses again for being here, and I would especially like to take a moment, as Chairman Tiffany did, to recognize Master Chief Britt Slabinski. Master Chief Slabinski is one of only 65 living Medal of Honor recipients.

And it is an honor to have you here to join us today, sir. And as a witness, I look forward to hearing your testimony.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I would like to recognize the Ranking Member of the Natural Resources Committee, Mr. Grijalva.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA

Mr. GRIJALVA. I introduced H.R. 3477 at the request of the U.S. Air Force, along with my good friend from Arizona, Mr. Gallego, and member of this Committee. The bill extends the withdrawal for the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range located in my district, which is a top priority for the Air Force.

The Goldwater Range has served as a military training facility for tactical aviation training and operational testing activities since its establishment during World War II. The current authorization is set to expire in October of 2024, so the goal is to include the extension in this year's NDAA to avoid any interruption in the access for this critical training facility.

It is my understanding that the Rules Committee last night en bloc included this particular amendment as part of a voice vote to send to the Floor some time today. But I still believe that a stand-alone piece of legislation is important because of the critical nature of assuring that the Goldwater Range is available to the Air Force and that extension, regardless of the machinations that might happen under the Authorization Act and other things that might or might not slow that down, that this still has importance as a standalone piece of legislation.

In addition to ensuring the continued use of the range by the Air Force and the Marine Corps for critical military training until

2049, the Air Force's legislative proposal includes the administrative transfer of some land back to the Department of the Interior. This is a housekeeping matter that is intended to simplify existing management protocol.

In addition to my bill, this hearing includes several bills aimed to honor, preserve, and share the history of our country while extending representation and inclusion of stories often not told across the National Park System. This is an important goal, especially when it comes to high-profile locations like the National Mall, which I know can and always has been a touchy subject, not only for this Committee, but for Congress. Hopefully, we can meet together in a bipartisan manner to meet the demand for new construction without compromising the long-term vision of America's front yard.

Chair Tiffany, thanks again for the consideration. I look forward to today's discussion.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Mr. Grijalva. And first I would like to recognize the gentleman from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DUSTY JOHNSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about H.R. 386, the Mount Rushmore Protection Act.

It was maybe 10 years ago, Mr. Chairman, when I was running a summer camp for teenagers in the Black Hills of South Dakota. And we had pulled up the bus, and the kids had gotten off, and we turned the corner. And there is this magnificent moment at the monument where everything is sort of lined up, and you get a shot of those four really impressive presidential faces. And a 14-year-old that was a part of the group said, "Oh, wow."

Now, I don't know how much time you all have spent with 14-year-olds, but they are pretty hard to impress. And it is pretty hard to get them to disconnect from that supercomputer that is in their hands. But in that moment, every single teenager, Mr. Chairman, was locked in on those incredible granite faces.

I suspect many of you have been to Mount Rushmore, so you know exactly what I talk about when I talk about that "oh wow" moment. These are massive faces of the presidents. When you see pictures of the sculpting of the monument, the workers hanging down from the top of the monument, they just seem so small. They are the size of George Washington's nose.

But what is so impressive to me about the monument is not the construction feat, but it is what it says about America. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt. These are imperfect men. They are not up on that monument because of their imperfections. They are up on that monument because of their strengths, because of the values that they brought to our country, the vision that they had for how we can build a more perfect union. Not perfect yet, but every day part of an endeavor to become more perfect.

So, the Mount Rushmore Protection Act makes it very clear that we are not going to use one nickel of taxpayer dollars to try to tear down that monument or to change its name. These are not idle

threats, I should note. It wasn't all that long ago that South Dakota's tallest peak was renamed without a vote of the people, without any acquiescence by the Governor, or the State Legislature, or people from the area. An unelected group just decided, well, your tallest mountain will be renamed, whether you like it or not.

And, again, it is also not an idle threat that those faces would be torn down from the monument. There have been some pretty prominent elected voices in my state and elsewhere who have called for just that to happen. We saw in Oregon not that long ago statues of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington torn down. We saw not all that long ago New York City take down Teddy Roosevelt's statue outside of the Natural History Museum. We even have some descendants of Thomas Jefferson who want his memorial here in Washington, DC to be destroyed.

I understand that these are imperfect men. But to the extent that, year in and year out, they were aware of their imperfections and those of their country, the fact that they, year in and year out, worked to move us closer to the kind of nation we all know that we should be is worth celebrating.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank this Committee for having a hearing on this bill. And I am honored that Senator Helene Duhamel, who represents that area of the state, is going to have an opportunity to tell you more about America's shrine to democracy, and why it is worth protecting.

With that, I would yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. Will the gentleman yield the balance of his time?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. TIFFANY. I just want to add a little anecdote. In the state of Wisconsin, we saw this a couple of years ago, where Lady Forward was torn down before the Wisconsin State Capitol, and thrown into a lake. Lady Forward represents women's suffrage, the state of Wisconsin being the first state to ratify women's suffrage.

So, I hear the message that you are delivering, Mr. Johnson. Thank you so much.

Now, I would like to recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Neguse. It is good to have you with us.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. JOE NEGUSE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO**

Mr. NEGUSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to be with you. And thank you to the witnesses for joining us here today. It is certainly nice to see you again, Mr. Laymon, and I am glad you could join us again in the Committee.

As the Chairman has, I suspect, already articulated, the hearing today largely centers on the importance of national memorials designed to ensure that the stories and lessons of our shared history are not forgotten, allowing us to learn from the past as we collectively work together to achieve a better future for our great country.

I want to start by talking about my bill, H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, which I am glad to see was included in today's hearing. During my first term in Congress, we passed another one of my bills to authorize the construction of

the Women's Suffrage National Monument on Federal lands in Washington, DC. It was in the 116th Congress, signed into law by the former President. And since that bill was enacted, sponsors of the memorial have coalesced around the idea of placing it directly on the National Mall, a decision that requires another Act of Congress.

The monument enjoys broad bipartisan support, including all of our nation's living first ladies, currently serving as honorary co-chairs. And I am grateful to them for their leadership, in addition to many others who serve as ambassadors and supporters of this movement.

I am glad to champion this cause and advocate for the Women's Suffrage National Monument to ensure that the contributions and struggles of women in the fight for equality are duly recognized and celebrated in this iconic setting, and I think this is a really important step forward.

Now, I understand there is always some hesitation about authorizing new memorials in what Congress previously set aside as a reserve area of the National Mall. But we also know that national monuments serve as powerful symbols of our shared history, reminding us of the struggles, achievements, and values that have shaped our nation. They are not merely static structures, they are living testaments to the many experiences and contributions of our nation's people, and they provide tangible connection to the past and other educational opportunities for present and future generations.

So, as we advocate for the establishment and protection of these monuments, it is essential that we lift up the voices that are reflected by this particular monument and, again, an effort that has been thoroughly bipartisan over the years, passed by a Democratic House, a Republican Senate, signed into law by President Trump 3 years ago, and excited to now see this next step in the evolution of this particular monument.

We will also be discussing H.R. 2717, Representative Blake Moore and Mark Veasey's bill, which authorizes the construction of the Medal of Honor Memorial on the National Mall. I certainly support their bill and look forward to discussing the details and determining how we can best honor Medal of Honor recipients, and I certainly think their proposal is worthy of this Committee's consideration.

Mount Rushmore National Memorial also holds, of course, historical and cultural sites of significance. And I know that we are taking up H.R. 386, the Mount Rushmore Protection Act, and look forward to the discussion on that bill, as well as the discussion on H.R. 3448, the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act.

And H.R. 4377, introduced, of course, by our Ranking Member and former Chairman, Chairman Grijalva. The legislation would provide a 25-year extension for the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range in Arizona to ensure accurate property records to support ongoing military training and operational activities. Timing is very fitting, of course, given that we are considering the NDAA on the Floor today, and I certainly look forward to hearing more about that bill.

So, again, I look forward to continuing the work of this Committee. I want to thank the Chairman. As I have said at prior hearings, during the 117th Congress, when I chaired this Subcommittee, we worked really hard to make sure that the work done by this particular Subcommittee stayed bipartisan. I think it is one of the last remaining bastions, I might suggest, in the U.S. Congress of a functioning Subcommittee that is focused on bipartisan work. And I am grateful to the Chairman for, I think, doing his part to try to emulate that approach. And that is reflected, I think, in the bills that he and the majority have selected for this hearing today.

With that, I will yield back to the Chairman, and thank him for his indulgence.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Ranking Member Neguse. And I now recognize Representative Moore for 5 minutes on H.R. 2717.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. BLAKE D. MOORE, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF UTAH**

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse, and to Chair Westerman, for the positive comments already on this bill, H.R. 2717. I will add to that, and give a little bit of a perspective, and even some personal.

I am so grateful for the opportunity I have today to testify in support of this bill, the Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Act, which I introduced with my friend, Congressman Marc Veasey from Texas. This important bill builds upon an effort we initiated last Congress to build a monument in Washington, DC to honor those who have received the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest honor.

This bill passed with unanimous support, 419 to 0. I don't know what else could emphasize clear support from our entire country than that type of vote. It doesn't always happen here. And this sets the stage for our new efforts to authorize a specific location for this monument on the Reserve. And candidly, equally important as establishing the momentum, we have to get this done.

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 the 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. Representative Veasey and I were honored to pay our respects when he laid in honor last year in the Rotunda. I understand that several of his family members are here today with us, and we are grateful for his legacy, which uplifts, inspires, and energizes us here today. I am confident that you all and his family 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 us that we are a nation of immense sacrifices put forth for the protection of the liberties that we 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 percent 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.

When I am asked about this bill back home, the thing that I boil it down to is, no matter what my time here is in Congress, this will be the first thing that I ever did. I look at completing legislation as our job. Some others focus on other things. I believe we are supposed to be legislators, and this was the first thing that I did. That is something that will always stick with me. And when my kids come back to Washington, DC, and we are successful in getting this placed where we want, where the country wants, on the National Mall, they will be able to recognize those values and those traits. This is personal to every one of us. This is the time to re-emphasize the most admirable traits of our nation and establish concrete reminders of those who wholly embody 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. It is our global stage, and it offers a space to learn, commemorate, celebrate our nation's rich cultural heritage. It is only fitting that this monument be situated near the Lincoln Memorial, paying the 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 and self-sacrifice extend above and beyond the call of duty. Only 65 of the recipients of the award are alive today. And as we tell their stories, we learn about each other, 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 for our enduring gratitude and admiration for our nation's brave and selfless defenders.

I joked earlier I have the Medal of Honor pinned, but this opportunity has given me a chance to meet personally with approximately maybe 10 actual Medal of Honor recipients. Two are here today that I know of. That is the greatest honor that I have had in my time in Congress, and may yet be the best that I ever get, whatever my time is.

This is an important monument. It is reflective of our nation's experience. It is unanimous here, and we need to make this location Act happen.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Representative Moore.

We are going to turn to the panel that we have before us here now. Let me remind the witnesses that under Committee Rules,

you must limit your oral statement to 5 minutes, but your entire statement will appear in the hearing record.

To begin your testimony, press the “on” button.

We use timing lights. When you begin, the light will turn green. At the end of 5 minutes, the light will turn red, and I will ask you to please complete your statement.

I would like now to introduce Dr. Ravi Chaudhary, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy Installations and Environment.

Dr. Chaudhary, you are recognized for 5 minutes, and I hope I pronounced your name accurately.

STATEMENT OF RAVI I. CHAUDHARY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. CHAUDHARY. Chairman, I am giving you a thumbs up. You did it perfectly. Thank you very much.

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and esteemed members of the Subcommittee, thank you for convening this hearing to discuss H.R. 4377, an important bill to amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 to extend the withdrawal and revision for the Barry M. Goldwater Range.

If not enacted during this legislative cycle, the current land withdrawal will expire in October 2024, and the Department of Defense will lose an important training capability.

The Department of the Air Force and the Department of the Navy support Representative Grijalva’s efforts regarding the Barry M. Goldwater Range, or BMGR.

As a former Air Force pilot, I can state from firsthand experience that open airspace and ranges are critical for conducting training and flight tests that replicate combat conditions. BMGR ensures that our air and naval forces are ready to deter aggression and, if called upon, win decisively.

Collaborative relationships with stakeholders are important for DoD. For the preparation of this legislation, the Department of the Air Force and Navy worked extensively with the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to ensure cooperation and collaboration for this effort.

I would like to begin my testimony with a brief history of BMGR. Located in southwestern Arizona, BMGR served as a military training range originally used to train pilots and aircrew for combat in World War II. Eighty years later, BMGR is one of the nation’s most capable and productive training ranges. It remains indispensable to the ability of the U.S. military to produce combat-ready aircrew needed to defend the nation.

The BMGR encompasses approximately 1.6 million acres of Federal public land withdrawn from public use and reserved for military training and testing. Withdrawal of the range is not permanent, and requires periodic extensions through congressional action. The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 extended the BMGR withdrawal for 25 years, and we request your support for another extension.

The BMGR is the nation's fourth largest land-based range and is the largest in which tactical aviation training is the predominant mission. It provides essential training capability for the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Navy. It is used as an area for armament, high-hazard testing, aerial gunnery, rocketry, electronic warfare training, tactical maneuvering, and equipment and developmental testing. Users of BMGR include the largest F-35 training wing in the Air Force from Luke Air Force Base, F-16s from the Tucson Air National Guard Base, and A-10s from the Special Operations units from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Users of BMGR West include pilots and F-18 Hornets AV-8B Harriers, and F-35Bs from the Marine Corps Air Force Station Yuma.

In summary, without an extension this fiscal year, the BMGR land withdrawal will expire on October 4, 2024, resulting in the cessation of critical training and test activities conducted by the Departments of the Air Force and Navy. This would directly impact our ability to train and test peer adversaries as outlined in the National Defense Strategy.

I will close my opening statement by sharing my own experience as a former Air Force pilot. In early September 2001, fresh out of pilot training, I had the honor of qualifying in the C-17 aircraft. In a few short days, the National Airspace System had been shut down due to the tragic events of 9/11. At that point, our nation was fully mobilized, and we quite simply didn't have the time to train. Our system of ranges allowed me to quickly build reps, deploy, and get into the fight. Were it not for the realistic training that my fellow pilots and I received at our auxiliary field and corresponding ranges, I would have been under-prepared for months and years ahead in which the challenges that were waiting for me.

I can honestly say that I am still with you today because the training standard afforded to me by ranges like BMGR. So, I thank you for your support of our ranges, but most importantly, my family thanks you.

As someone who has direct experience flying our nation's test and training ranges, then applying my training in combat situations, I can easily say that this capability is crucial to mission accomplishment and the safety of our pilots as they execute important national security missions.

I respectfully request your support of H.R. 4377. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Chaudhary follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HONORABLE RAVI I. CHAUDHARY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT
ON H.R. 4377

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and esteemed members of this subcommittee, thank you for conducting this hearing to discuss H.R. 4377—a vital bill to amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 to extend the withdrawal and revision for the Barry M. Goldwater Range. If not enacted, the current land withdrawal will expire in October 2024 and the Department of Defense will lose access to a vitally important range.

The Department of the Air Force and the Department of the Navy wholeheartedly support Representative Grijalva's efforts regarding the Barry M. Goldwater Range,

or BMGR. If the current withdrawal expires, both departments will lose access to a vital training range that is essential to our nation's defense.

The BMGR is in southwestern Arizona. Since 1941, the BGMR has served as a military training range, originally used to train pilots and aircrew for combat in World War II. Eighty years later, the BMGR is one of the nation's most capable and productive training ranges and remains indispensable to the ability of the U.S. Armed Forces to produce the combat-ready aircrews needed to defend the nation and its interests.

The BMGR is the nation's fourth largest land-based range and the largest at which tactical aviation training is the predominant mission. It provides critical training capability for the U.S. Air Force, United State Marine Corps, and the U.S. Navy. Users of BMGR East include the largest F-35 training wing in the Air Force, from Luke Air Force Base, F-16s from the Tucson Air National Guard base, and A-10s and Special Operations units from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Users of BMGR West include Marine pilots and Naval flight officers in F/A-18 Hornets, AV-8B Harriers, and F-35Bs from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma.

Although aircrew training is the predominant mission of the BMGR, the range is also vital for preparing personnel and units performing a wide range of missions relevant to current and future threats to our nation. It is routinely used for operational testing activities (also referred to as operational test and evaluation). Some of the military training and testing activities involve the use of live-fire air-to-air, air-to-ground, ground-to-ground, and ground-to-air munitions. The BMGR provides realistic training so that our servicemembers can train to meet both current and future threats.

The BMGR encompasses approximately 1.6 million acres of federal public land withdrawn from public use and reserved for military training and testing. Although the BMGR has been in operation since it was established in 1941, withdrawal of the range is not permanent and requires periodic extensions through congressional action. The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 withdrew the federal public land as one military range but reserved the eastern and western portions of the range for separate use by the Secretaries of the Air Force and Navy, respectively. It is used as an area for armament and high-hazard testing; aerial gunnery, rocketry, electronic warfare training; tactical maneuvering and air support; equipment and tactics development testing and training; and for other defense related purposes. The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 extended the BMGR withdrawal for 25 years and without Congressional action, the withdrawal will expire on October 4, 2024.

The Departments of the Air Force and Navy enthusiastically support H.R. 4377, which would extend the BMGR land withdrawal for 25-years. This bill would not change underlying federal agency jurisdiction or enact a 50-year or permanent withdrawal, which were alternatives analyzed in the September 2021 Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS). Public comments received during the LEIS process were overwhelmingly supportive of the 25-year renewal of the withdrawal.

This bill also requests a small addition to the withdrawal comprising approximately 2,366 acres or an increase of roughly 0.14 percent. The additional land is adjacent to the Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field (AFAF). The Gila Bend Auxiliary Field is a unique support asset integral to the daily operation of the range. It is used for practice touch-and-go landings, simulated flameout patterns, precautionary flameout patterns, and as an emergency divert field. The Gila Bend AFAF provides the facilities required to support maintenance and operations for both the airfield and BMGR-East. Given its austere nature and proximity to the range, the field is routinely used as a forward operating base. It is quickly becoming a preferred training location. The additional land would enhance security and safety of flight operations by allowing the DAF to establish a complete security perimeter adjacent to the airfield. The additional land would also provide control of land that is within Accident Potential Zone-1 for Runway 17/35, which would remove the potential for incompatible activities or land uses to occur on that land. The additional land would also allow the Department of the Air Force to control the use and access to land under restricted airspace (R-2305) so that surface activities in these parcels remain compatible with the training operations in the overlying airspace, which extends from the ground surface to 24,000 feet above mean sea level.

The Department of the Air Force appreciates the professional and productive working relationship with the Department of Interior on this legislation. In preparing this legislation, the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps worked extensively with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Through its land withdrawal review processes, BLM identified needed corrections to land status records, including the revocation of historic Public Land Orders and Executive Orders from

the World War II era. BLM also identified a need to clarify the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986 regarding lands identified for relinquishment. This bill corrects these land status anomalies and helps clarify the current land status so that federal record keeping is accurate for posterity. Finally, at the recommendation of BLM, and in consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, language in this bill would transfer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approximately 21 acres of land, which would be included in the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and the Cabeza Prieta Wilderness.

In summary, without an extension, the BMGR land withdrawal will expire on October 4, 2024, resulting in the cessation of critical training and testing activities on the range conducted by the Departments of the Air Force and Navy. This would directly impact our ability to train and test against peer adversaries as directed in the National Defense Strategy. I respectfully request your support of H.R. 4377 and look forward to your questions.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO DR. RAVI I. CHAUDHARY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE FOR ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Mr. Chaudhary did not submit responses to the Committee by the appropriate deadline for inclusion in the printed record.

Questions Submitted by Representative Westerman

Question 1. The extension for the Barry M. Goldwater Range, H.R. 4377, also includes a provision clearing the title for a parcel of land to be included in an adjacent wildlife refuge. What is the Air Force's position on this part of the proposal?

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Dr. Chaudhary. I now recognize Mr. Mike Reynolds, the Deputy Director for Congressional and External Relations at the National Park Service.

You have 5 minutes, sir.

STATEMENT OF MIKE REYNOLDS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. REYNOLDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on four of the bills on today's agenda. I would like to submit our full statements for the record, and summarize the Department's views.

I would also like to submit a statement for the record on H.R. 4377, which would extend an existing military withdrawal and reservation for the Barry M. Goldwater Range in southwestern Arizona. This statement was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management, and we would request that any questions about that bill be referred to them.

H.R. 386 would prohibit the National Park Service from using Federal funds to alter, change, destroy, or remove in whole or in part any name, face, or other feature on Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

The Department takes seriously its commitment to protect resources entrusted to its management, including protecting the iconic carvings of the four Presidents on Mount Rushmore. The

Department, however, does not support H.R. 386, as it is unnecessary and, as drafted, could potentially interfere with the preservation and maintenance of this world-renowned landmark. If the Committee decides to move forward with this legislation, we would appreciate having the opportunity to work with the sponsor and the Committee on amendments that would help ensure that the necessary preservation and maintenance of the memorial is not jeopardized.

H.R. 386 would also designate the mountain where Mount Rushmore National Memorial is located as Mount Rushmore. The Department recognizes Congress' prerogative to provide confirmation of this designation in statute.

H.R. 1318 would authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the women's suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

Similarly, H.R. 2717 would authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by the Medal of Honor recipients.

The Department strongly supports honoring the American suffragists' long struggle to secure the 19th Amendment, which provided women with the right to vote. We also strongly support honoring the extraordinary acts of our nation's Medal of Honor recipients. We support establishing both of these monuments in places of national honor and prominence.

However, since the establishment of the Reserve by Congress in 2003, the Department has endeavored to protect the Reserve by discouraging the establishment of any new commemorative works within it. It is for that reason that we do not support H.R. 1318 or H.R. 2717 as currently drafted. This position is consistent with other testimony the Department has submitted on legislation that proposes new commemorative works within the Reserve.

H.R. 3448 would make several changes to the American Battlefield Protection Program intended to enhance the protection and preservation of America's battlefields. The Department supports the goals of H.R. 3448 to expand access to this program to a broader range of stakeholders. However, we have concerns with certain provisions of the bill related to ensuring the continued stewardship of lands receiving Federal funding. But the Department would appreciate the opportunity to work with the bill's sponsor and the Committee on amendments to address the issues raised in our written statement.

Chairman Tiffany, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you have, and thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Reynolds follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL T. REYNOLDS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
 CONGRESSIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS,
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 ON H.R. 386, H.R. 1318, H.R. 2717, AND H.R. 3448

H.R. 386, “Mount Rushmore National Protection Act”

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior’s views on H.R. 386, a bill to provide that no Federal funds shall be used to alter, change, destroy, or remove, in whole or in part, any name, face, or other feature on the Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

The Department takes seriously its commitment to protect resources entrusted to its management, including protecting the iconic carving of the four U.S. presidents on Mount Rushmore National Memorial. The Department, however, does not support H.R. 386 as it is unnecessary and, as drafted, could potentially interfere with the preservation and maintenance of this world-renowned landmark. Regarding the bill’s naming of Mount Rushmore, the Department recognizes Congress’ prerogative to enact this designation.

Located in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Mount Rushmore National Memorial was authorized in 1925 to commemorate the founding, expansion, preservation, and unification of the United States and has been under the administration of the National Park Service (NPS) since 1938. The famous mountainside sculpture paying tribute to Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt has become one of our Nation’s most recognizable landmarks both at home and abroad. The 1,278-acre Memorial receives over two million visitors each year who have the opportunity not only to view the sculpture but also to experience the beauty of the Black Hills and learn about the complex and controversial history associated with the Memorial, which was established on lands that are sacred to Indigenous peoples.

Section 3 of H.R. 386 would prohibit the National Park Service (NPS) from using funds appropriated by Congress to administer the Memorial to “alter, change, destroy, or remove, in whole or in part, any name, face, or other feature” on the Memorial. Given the existing laws, regulations, and policies that protect the Memorial’s sculpture in its historic form, the Department does not see a need for this legislation. Additionally, the NPS routinely performs vegetation treatments at the base of the sculpture to maintain the viewshed of the Memorial; maintains sensors and monitoring equipment on the features of the sculpture; and maintains and upgrades the security equipment, including fencing and other infrastructure, that supports protection of the sculpture. Depending on how the words “alter”, “change”, and “feature” are interpreted in the bill as drafted, this language could prevent the NPS from carrying out the very activities that help ensure that the Memorial remains safe and recognizable for future generations. However, if the Committee decides to move forward with H.R. 386, we would appreciate having the opportunity to work with the sponsor and the Committee to try to ensure that the language does not jeopardize the necessary preservation and maintenance of the Memorial.

Section 4 of H.R. 386 would designate the mountain where Mount Rushmore National Memorial is located as Mount Rushmore. This section would establish in statute the name for the mountain that was recognized as Mount Rushmore by the United States Geographic Board in 1930. There is no proposal pending before that organization, now called the Board on Geographic Names, or in Congress, to change the name of Mount Rushmore. However, the Department recognizes that it is within the prerogative of Congress to pass legislation designating any geographic feature in the United States and thus provide a statutory confirmation of an existing name.

Chairman Tiffany, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

H.R. 1318, “Women’s Suffrage National Monument Location Act”

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior’s views on H.R. 1318, a bill to authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the women’s suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, and for other purposes.

The Department strongly supports honoring the American suffragists’ long struggle to secure the 19th Amendment which provided women with the right to vote. We support building the Women’s Suffrage National Monument in a place of national honor and prominence. However, since the establishment of the Reserve by Congress in 2003, the Department has endeavored to protect the Reserve by

discouraging the establishment of any new commemorative works within it. It is for that reason that we do not support H.R. 1318 as currently drafted. This position is consistent with other testimony the Department has submitted on legislation that proposes new commemorative works within the Reserve.

H.R. 1318 would authorize the Women's Suffrage National Monument to be established in the Reserve, which otherwise would not be permitted under the Commemorative Works Act (40 USC 89 et seq.) (CWA). The bill requires the monument to comply with other provisions of the CWA.

In December 2020, legislation to authorize the establishment of the Women's Suffrage National Monument (then called Every Word We Utter Monument) was enacted as Public Law 116-217. This law authorizes the monument to be established on Federal land managed by the National Park Service or the General Services Administration in Washington, DC, in accordance with the CWA. The Department testified in support of authorizing the establishment of the monument with the understanding that the CWA, including the Act's prohibition on locating new memorials in the Reserve, would apply.

The CWA was enacted to ensure that proper consideration is given to authorization, location, and design of new memorials within Washington, DC. Congress amended the CWA in 2003, establishing the Reserve and declaring it a completed work of civic art where "the siting of new commemorative works is prohibited." The CWA identifies the Reserve as "the great cross-axis of the Mall" which extends from the United States Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, and from the White House to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

The Department's concerns about establishing the Women's Suffrage National Monument in the Reserve are similar to those expressed by the Department on similar legislation. Other sponsors of memorials have sought prominent locations as well, and have worked with the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Commission of Fine Arts to secure sites outside of the Reserve that meet their needs. The National Park Service is committed to continuing to work with the sponsors of the Women's Suffrage National Monument to identify a suitable location for this monument that is not in the Reserve.

Through communication that the National Park Service has had with the monument sponsor, we understand that they are also considering multiple sites in Area I. If the sponsors of the monument were to obtain approval from Congress for placement in Area I, a number of prominent sites would become available for consideration. Area I is part of the monumental core but includes sites outside of the Reserve. The monument sponsors would then have the full range of options available in both Area I and Area II.

Congress' 2003 Reserve designation responded to a pressing need to preserve the integrity of the National Mall and rapidly diminishing public space in the city's monumental core. The pressures on the Mall's open space have amplified through time. In addition to hosting over 35 million visitors to the Mall each year, more than 9,000 permitted events including 1,000 first amendment demonstrations take place on or near the National Mall annually. The space is also heavily used for recreational activities, national celebrations, critical operational and security movements associated with its placement at the city center, and park visitation. Maintaining the Mall's open spaces and existing architecture is essential to ensuring that it continues to convey its significance as our nation's premier civic space. We urge the Committee to protect this special place for the enjoyment of Americans for generations to come.

Chairman Tiffany, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

H.R. 2717, "Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act"

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2717, a bill to authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients.

The Department strongly supports honoring the extraordinary acts of our Nation's Medal of Honor recipients, and we support establishing the monument authorized for that purpose in a place of national honor and prominence. However, since the establishment of the Reserve by Congress in 2003, the Department has endeavored to protect the Reserve by discouraging the establishment of any new commemorative works within it. It is for that reason that we do not support H.R. 2717 as currently drafted. This position is consistent with other testimony the Department has submitted on legislation that proposes new commemorative works within the Reserve.

H.R. 2717 would authorize the National Medal of Honor Monument to be established in the Reserve and attached to, or not more than 1,000 feet from, the Lincoln Memorial. Locating the monument in the Reserve would otherwise not be permitted under the Commemorative Works Act (40 USC 89 et seq.) (CWA). In addition, siting the monument within 1,000 feet of the Lincoln Memorial would conflict with the CWA's prohibition on interfering with or encroaching on an existing commemorative work.

Legislation to authorize the establishment of the National Medal of Honor Monument was enacted in December, 2021, as Public Law 117-80. This law authorizes the monument to be established on Federal land managed by the National Park Service or the General Services Administration in Washington, DC, in accordance with the CWA. The Department testified in support of authorizing the establishment of the monument with the understanding that the CWA, including the Act's prohibition on locating new memorials in the Reserve, as well as its prohibition on interfering with or encroaching on an existing commemorative work, would apply.

The CWA was enacted to ensure that proper consideration is given to authorization, location, and design of new memorials within Washington, DC. Congress amended the CWA in 2003, establishing the Reserve and declaring it a completed work of civic art where "the siting of new commemorative works is prohibited." The CWA identifies the Reserve as "the great cross-axis of the Mall" which extends from the United States Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, and from the White House to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

The Department's concerns about establishing the National Medal of Honor Monument in the Reserve are similar to those expressed by the Department on similar legislation. Other sponsors of memorials have sought prominent locations as well, and have worked with the National Park Service, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the Commission of Fine Arts to secure sites outside of the Reserve that meet their needs. The National Park Service is committed to working with the sponsors of the National Medal of Honor Monument to develop a site selection study that would work toward identification of a suitable location for this monument that is not in the Reserve.

Congress' 2003 Reserve designation responded to a pressing need to preserve the integrity of the National Mall and rapidly diminishing public space in the city's monumental core. The pressures on the Mall's open space have amplified through time. In addition to hosting over 35 million visitors to the Mall each year, more than 9,000 permitted events including 1,000 first amendment demonstrations take place on or near the National Mall annually. The space is also heavily used for recreational activities, national celebrations, critical operational and security movements associated with its placement at the city center, and park visitation. Maintaining the Mall's open spaces and existing architecture is essential to ensuring that it continues to convey its significance as our nation's premier civic space. We urge the Committee to protect this special place for the enjoyment of Americans for generations to come.

Chairman Tiffany, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

H.R. 3448, "American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement"

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3448, a bill to amend chapter 3081 of title 54, United States Code, to enhance the protection and preservation of America's battlefields.

The Department supports the goals of H.R. 3448 to expand access to the American Battlefield Preservation Program to a broader range of stakeholders. However, we have concerns with certain provisions of the bill related to ensuring the continued stewardship of lands receiving Federal funding.

H.R. 3448 would amend the existing statute to:

- Add "Tribes" and "nonprofit organizations" to the list of entities eligible to receive Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants;
- Make "associated historic sites" in the *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* and the *Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States* no longer eligible for American Battlefield Protection Program grants;
- Extend the eligibility for Battlefield Restoration Grants to all eligible battlefield sites regardless of whether they have previously received Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants; and

- Require the program to submit updates to Congress on the *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* and the *Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States* detailing preservation activities, changes in condition, and other developments relating to the battlefields two years after the enactment of the bill and every ten years thereafter.

The American Battlefield Protection Act authorizes the National Park Service to administer the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) to protect battlefields and sites of armed conflict on American soil through technical assistance and financial assistance. The ABPP supports community-driven stewardship of historic resources through four grant opportunities: Preservation Planning, Battlefield Restoration, Battlefield Interpretation, and Battlefield Land Acquisition. All grants are awarded competitively and on an annual basis, except for Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant awards, which are made on a rolling basis throughout the year.

Preservation Planning Grants provide funds from National Recreation & Preservation (Cultural Programs) to State, Tribal, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions to support preservation and planning projects at historic battlefields and associated sites in the United States. Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant awards are made from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to State and local governments to pay up to 50% of the cost of fee-simple acquisition or easement interest in properties within eligible sites; amounts available vary each year. Interpretation and Restoration grants annually award up to \$1 million each in LWCF funds to pay up to 50% of the cost for States, Tribes, local governments, and nonprofit organizations to interpret and restore "day of battle" conditions, respectively.

The Department would support expanding eligibility to include Tribes if the bill were amended to address any necessary authorizations related to tribal eligibility for LWCF funding as well as the feasibility of land transactions and the Federal financial assistance requirements for protective Federal covenants upon lands governed by a sovereign nation.

Regarding the provision of H.R. 3448 that would expand eligibility for Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to include non-profit organizations, the Department would want to ensure non-profit recipients can guarantee the same degree of permanent protection that is required of State and local governments receiving ABPP funding.

H.R. 3448 would also expand the scope of the ABPP's Battlefield Restoration grants which, currently, are only provided for land that has been preserved through a Battlefield Land Acquisition grant. The Department supports the intent of this provision and would note that the ABPP program is currently working to determine if there is an administrative path to address the limitation on eligibility. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss possible conditions that should be required in conjunction with expanding eligibility.

H.R. 3448 would clarify that ABPP grants are limited to battlefields listed in the previous reports to Congress, specifically excluding non-battlefield "associated historic sites" listed in those reports. It would require the Department to submit updated Battlefield Reports to Congress every 10 years. The Department has no objections to these provisions.

The Department would appreciate the opportunity to work with the bill's sponsor and the Committee on amendments to address the points raised in this statement.

Chairman Tiffany, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD TO MR. MIKE REYNOLDS, DEPUTY
DIRECTOR, CONGRESSIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mr. Reynolds did not submit responses to the Committee by the appropriate deadline for inclusion in the printed record.

Questions Submitted by Representative Westerman

Question 1. America is set to celebrate our 250th anniversary in three years; in 2026. How is the National Park Service (NPS) is planning for celebrations? What role could our nation's battlefields will play in America 250 events?

Question 2. There are over 40 protected battlefield sites throughout Arkansas, primarily associated with the Civil War. Many of these sites have been protected through the American Battlefield Protection Program, which is a great example of the conservation work that can occur through public-private partnerships. Would this work have been possible without private partners? Can these partnerships serve as a model for other NPS programs?

Question 3. This Committee has heard numerous concerns about the lengthy and cumbersome appraisal process and its effect on acquiring battlefield lands. How long do these appraisals typically take? Is NPS evaluating any internal processes that could be streamlined to help speed up the appraisal process?

Question 4. NPS testified against locating both the Women's Suffrage National Monument and the Medal of Honor National Monument on the National Mall in Washington, DC. These are both bipartisan bills, collectively co-sponsored by at least 29 Republicans and 29 Democrats.

4a) Why does the Biden administration believe monuments to some of our nation's bravest veterans and the women's suffrage movement are undeserving of prominent locations in our nation's capital?

4b) If these groups don't rise to the level of garnering support for a location on the National Mall from the NPS and the administration, who would?

4c) Last Congress, the National Park Service also testified in opposition to locating the Global War on Terrorism Memorial on the National Mall. Thankfully, Congress authorized this location anyway for the Monument in the National Defense Authorization Act. What message do you think it sends to our active military service members when the NPS is telling them that any future conflict they serve in will be undeserving of a memorial placed on the National Mall?

4d) The NPS has testified that the National Mall is a "completed work of civic art." Can you please tell us how many women are featured in this "completed" work of art?

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Mr. Reynolds. Now I want to recognize Members for questions.

And first, Mr. Fulcher from Idaho, you have 5 minutes.

Mr. FULCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was listening to that commentary and just reflecting. In the last few weeks, not just on this Committee but the other Committee I serve on, we have talked about banning ourselves from harvesting minerals so we can buy from our enemies; we have talked about burning our forests instead of managing them; we have talked about drag shows for our fighting force; we have talked about protecting Ukraine's borders instead of our own; refusing to prosecute sex and drug traffickers and paying for kids to change their gender. So, why not add the need to protect Mount Rushmore from people who want to destroy it? That is what we are dealing with in the U.S. Congress.

I know there are other topics on the agenda today. But this one is right up there at the top of taking the cake. If we work hard enough, we can destroy our history. If we work hard enough, we can allow stupid things to destroy what is good about this country.

As my colleague, Congressman Johnson, said, we are far from perfect. We have a lot of flaws. But there are a lot of good things going on, too. So, to that end, Mr. Chairman, rather than ask questions, I am just going to close with a statement.

I support Congressman Johnson's bill. It is a shame that it has to be brought up, but I thank him for bringing it to the forefront so that we can just make a statement here to stop this portion of the lunacy moving forward.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. I would like to now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Neguse.

Mr. NEGUSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to both of our witnesses for your testimony, for being here today. We are certainly grateful.

Mr. Reynolds, I want to talk a bit about the Commemorative Works Act. And I understand the Department's position, in terms of contextually understanding that the Department has taken a similar position with respect to amending the CWA and enabling monuments to be placed in the Reserve since the enactment of the CWA back in 2003.

While I understand the historical context of the Department's position, I do struggle to understand the Department's rationale, particularly in light of the modifications that were made to the CWA, as you know, last year, which I supported and many of my colleagues support, and I think it was the right thing to do to ultimately ensure that the Global War on Terrorism Memorial was placed in the Reserve.

And myself, my colleague from Utah, I think we made compelling cases, as do our colleagues who support the substance of both my bill and Mr. Moore's bill, regarding the necessity for having these respective memorials within the Reserve, as well. I think it is important for those who might be tuning in kind of contextually to better understand, for particularly those who might not have explored the full breadth of the Reserve and all the monuments on our National Mall, how many commemorative works are on the National Mall?

Mr. REYNOLDS. There are a lot. And there are also the big ones, like the Lincoln Memorial, but we also have tons of smaller ones that you bump into, right? So, there are greater than 50, I would say.

Mr. NEGUSE. Within the Reserve, by my count, there are 40. Does that seem accurate?

Mr. REYNOLDS. That would be about right.

Mr. NEGUSE. OK, now, of those 40, 22 of them are to a wide variety of different statesmen and patriots, presidents—Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, obviously, as you know—but also many others that perhaps some citizens aren't aware of necessarily, a variety of generals who have served in our country's armed forces valiantly, for example.

Are there any commemorative works within the Reserve that are dedicated to women?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Not in the Reserve that I am aware of.

Mr. NEGUSE. To my understanding, there are a variety of commemorative works dedicated to different parts of American history, as well. For example, the memorial to aviation history. You are familiar with that memorial?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. NEGUSE. And the memorial essentially to the history of horses in our country, right? This is the Lockkeeper's House, which is on the National Reserve.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. NEGUSE. Yes. There are, of course, as we have talked about, a variety of very incredibly important, meaningful, solemn

memorials to our armed forces, veterans, and those who we have lost in wars during the course of our country's history.

The point I am getting at is, of those, that volume of memorials that are on the National Mall, it is our judgment and the judgment of many others who support this piece of legislation, including every living former first lady, on a bipartisan basis, that the women's suffrage monument merits a place among these other 40 monuments within the Reserve.

And given the acreage within the National Mall that is available, how much green space is in the National Mall, currently?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Of the total acreage, when you look at a map, there looks like a lot of green space.

Mr. NEGUSE. Sure.

Mr. REYNOLDS. We use that, as you would know very well, Ranking Member, in terms of 9,000 events a year, 1,000 First Amendment events, I was just thinking about the July Fourth celebrations that the Chairman was talking about. So, that is part of the thinking behind the Commemorative Works Act.

Mr. NEGUSE. No, I understand. How much acreage is on the National Mall, the Reserve?

Mr. REYNOLDS. I am drawing a blank on acreage, but I would say it is—

Mr. NEGUSE. 699 acres?

Mr. REYNOLDS. I was going to say about 1,000 acres, and I would say probably roughly a quarter to half of it is still green, as it were.

Mr. NEGUSE. So, 699 acres, right?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Yes.

Mr. NEGUSE. And the acreage that would be needed to build this National Monument, are you aware of how much acreage would be necessary?

Mr. REYNOLDS. No, I haven't seen the final plans for it.

Mr. NEGUSE. My understanding is it is 1 acre. So, 1 acre of the 700 acres of green space on the National Mall does not seem like an unreasonable request. For that reason, I would certainly encourage my colleagues to be supportive of this particular bill, as well as Mr. Moore's bill.

With that, I yield back and I thank both of the gentlemen for their testimony.

Mr. TIFFANY. The Ranking Member yields. Next, the Representative from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson, would you like 5 minutes for questioning?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, thank you very much.

Mr. Reynolds, thanks for being here, thanks for working for our nation. Is there any court case that causes the National Park Service to be concerned that, I think the wording of my bill is "alter, change, destroy, or remove" would prevent routine maintenance?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Congressman, thank you for that question. We share with you our love of Mount Rushmore, our stewardship of it. And really, if I could speak in plain language to you, if we could sit down with the sponsors of this bill, we share the goals of what is happening with the protection of Mount Rushmore in perpetuity, but we do management actions there.

To your point, we have fencing. We have, shall I say, monitoring devices to keep it secure. We have the threats that you mentioned. There are also terrorism threats, whatever might come our way. The actions require removing vegetation. And as you also indicated, workers on the face. We want to make sure in a very particular way that the language just wouldn't prevent us from having those management actions done, which I don't think is the bill's intent, right?

Mr. JOHNSON. No, that is exactly right.

Mr. REYNOLDS. That is where I think we could find common ground, sir, in working out some language there.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, of course the bill is not intended to keep you from engaging in management actions, nor do I think it does. I mean, that is why I asked about court interpretations.

We have tens of thousands of court cases that interpret what ability the Federal agencies have to act under law. I am just not aware of any that would come even close to prohibiting the management actions, given the language of the bill. Am I in error?

Mr. REYNOLDS. I don't believe so, sir. I think you are correct. And we can confirm that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I mean, certainly, let's work together. If we decide that there is case law that complicates or that calls into question some weakness of our statutory proposal, then we are open to change it. I am not a lawyer, thank goodness, but what I understand about statutory construction is that when you look at words like "alter, change, destroy, or remove," it would be pretty hard to interpret that to mean that people can't engage in routine maintenance or management activities. But thank you for raising the concern, certainly.

Mr. REYNOLDS. That would be our hope, as well. Thank you, sir.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. Next, I would like to recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Kamlager-Dove, for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I want to thank you both for your testimony.

Assistant Secretary, I am sure you are hoping that we will pass the NDAA, given your remarks.

Mr. Reynolds, I also want to thank you for your testimony. And you are right, national monuments and memorials serve as a way to honor, preserve, and really stimulate the inquiry and learning of the history of our country. And to Representative Johnson's point, I strongly believe that means telling the truth about our history so that we can reflect on our imperfections and commit to doing better now and in the future.

Mr. Reynolds, you said it is important to honor the suffragists as it relates to H.R. 1318, and I want to emphasize that we would honor all of them. And I hope that two of the monuments being discussed today do not gloss over key components of our history, including gross injustices, particularly against Black women and Indigenous communities.

H.R. 1318 aims to place a women's suffrage monument on the Reserve of the National Mall, and I appreciate that all of the first ladies are in support of it. I hope that this monument will portray an accurate depiction of who the 19th Amendment gave the right

to vote in 1920, who was leading the movement to ensure all of the women did in fact have equal rights, and who did not.

The 19th Amendment only applied to White women. Indigenous women did not gain the right to vote until 1924. First-generation Asian Americans did not gain the right to vote until 1952. Black women did not gain that right until 1965. So, if we are going to tell American history, let's tell it all. If we work hard enough, we certainly can destroy the history of our country, and that comes from not telling all of it.

For instance, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony are often credited as leading the women's suffrage movement. And this false and harmful narrative disregards their blatant racism and work to render nearly invisible the Black women who labored for the suffragist movement and actually worked to advance feminist and womanist ideals in our nation. In fact, Susan B. Anthony said, and I quote, "I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman."

So, I agree that women are long overdue a place on this Mall. I agree that narrative monuments are important. And I also agree that we have to tell the full spectrum of the history of the country and how we got here. It is our failures, it is our shortcomings, it is our imperfections that actually allow us to learn. And if we are not sharing those, we cannot learn and use them to stimulate how to be better.

I was thinking about Thomas Jefferson as it relates to the Rushmore Act and Monticello. How honest are we about the fact that he raped a colored slave girl and forced her to bear children, and she was not deemed a human? That is part of the history of the country. You can judge it, but you can't if you don't know it.

So, if we are courageous enough to protect monuments, if we are courageous enough to continue to share our history, if we are even courageous enough to try to create history, let's not be afraid of all of the colors in the history, because that is the thing that is going to make us stronger. So, while you didn't mention these in your remarks about why you have concerns about some of these bills, I hope you take this back because it is as important. What you shared, what Representative Johnson shared, what Representative Neguse shared is the importance of words and what they mean. Having them is as important as excluding them, and that should also be included in the discussion that we are having about some very important, and no pun intended, monumental bills.

With that, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlelady yields. And now I would like to recognize the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Stauber.

Mr. STAUBER. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Master Chief Slabinski, it is great to be in your presence. You have given us the opportunity to sit up here and talk, and hear legislation, whether we agree with one another or not. Thank you for your service.

And Mr. Chairman, I would like to voice my strong support for H.R. 386, the Mount Rushmore Protection Act, introduced by my good friend and colleague, Representative Johnson.

Mr. Reynolds, as Mr. Johnson was questioning you, it reminded me, I leaned over to Representative Fulcher, and I said, "We work

for the people. You don't work for the Park Service. You work for the people." Mr. Johnson was elected. His representation in South Dakota wants him to do this.

So, I would just say that, as Mount Rushmore represents the long journey that this country has been on over the past 250 years, as we look at American history, we need to examine all of it. Every step forward and back has brought us to where we are today, a shining city on the Hill, that values individual liberty and freedom above all else.

Accordingly, I oppose efforts to change monuments like Mount Rushmore. I oppose efforts to rid ourselves of reminders of who we are and where we came from. I oppose efforts by woke mobs to eliminate patriotic symbols of the great American experiment.

This Administration has time and time again ignored the intent of the Congress, stretching the law and taking unilateral action without recognizing the will of the American people or communities its decisions will impact. And, frankly, the Department of the Interior has been at the center of these actions.

Thus, I believe that this legislation is important to ensure this or a future administration does not cave to pressure of those who want to rewrite history simply because they disagree with it. This legislation is important to ensure our full history is protected, and I stand strong and firm with my elected representative from South Dakota who is putting this legislation forward.

And I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. I would now like to recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Grijalva, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, and let me thank both witnesses. And certainly, the information from BLM relative to the range needs to be shared and incorporated into our discussions. I appreciate the testimony on that.

Comments have been made about destroying our history of our nation, comments have been made about rewriting the history of our nation, I thought the comments by my colleague from California were sharp, but appropriate in the sense that the purpose of our history is to also fill in the blanks, the things that have been left out. And yes, Mount Rushmore and the protection of that iconic representation of our nation is important. So, too, is the history of the Sioux Nations and the Black Hills and the conflict ongoing to this date.

And as we tell the history of the of this nation, one of the frustrations is how do we fill in the blanks? How do we tell the full story? It is not a question of embarrassment. It is not a question of pointing out and demeaning. It is telling the full story.

And I think, Mr. Reynolds, to continue to insist on filling in the blanks is not about some agenda on diversity or anything. This is empirical, this is history. Let's tell it. I think it makes us stronger and it makes us a better people.

Even right now, the Latino Museum, which people have fought for, Women's Museum, the appropriations process under the Majority is nickel-and-diming that museum and not giving any support to its full establishment. The first time you are going to have a consequential museum to tell the full history of this country

that receives no support from its government. I think that is wrong. I really do.

And these discussions about these items are important. I don't doubt it. I am not here to demean any of the pieces of legislation. I am just here to say that when we bring up a point about filling in the blanks, it is not an attack on a piece of legislation, my friend. It is an acknowledgment that our part hasn't been told.

And Medal of Honor winners? Ira Hayes putting all that history, that man couldn't vote in the state of Arizona until 1948. I think that is part of history.

And with America comes our democracy. And with America comes all the good things that we learned and that we believe in. But with America also comes some warts, some blemishes that generations to come and these generations now need to know about to make us stronger, to make us fuller, and to make us more appreciative of one another.

I appreciate the conversation today. It is kind of ironic that, as we talk about the support we need to have for our military, that we have a Senate holding up appointing the heads of the Marine Corps and other military units over a political and value decision about a woman's right to choose that differs with the policy in the military. How is that consistent with supporting our military and supporting our men and women in uniform?

And as we talk about the National Defense Authorization Act, we might get bogged down on issues that are irrelevant to the security, the defense, and the men and women serving this nation. We might get bogged down and not move forward because of that spite. And I think that if we are going to tell history, let's tell it all.

But, today, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the agenda, I appreciate the things you and Mr. Neguse have brought forward, and I also appreciate very much the comments that were made that, as we tell our history, let's tell the truth.

I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. I would like to recognize Mr. Westerman for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany, and thank you again for the witnesses for being here today. And I appreciate the discussions that we have had. And I would agree that when we tell history, we should tell all of the history. We learn from history. And if we don't learn from history, then we are very apt to make the same mistakes going forward.

And I am grateful that we have the beautiful National Museum of African American History and Culture, which is one of my favorite places to visit on the Mall. It tells the story in a way that I don't think could be told anyplace else, so I am grateful that we have that. But I also think we need to tell the story of women's suffrage, and it is appropriate to put something on the Reserve to tell that story.

I want to shift gears a little bit and talk about the air bases. Mr. Chaudhary, it is my understanding that, in addition to the Barry M. Goldwater Range in Arizona, that the Air Force also has a separate legislative proposal to expand training capabilities at the Nevada Test and Training Range at Nellis Air Force Base. Can you

please talk more about this proposal and the importance of both bases to the Air Force's readiness?

Dr. CHAUDHARY. Thank you, Congressman, for the question there. And I can relate this through my experiences as an Air Force pilot and somebody who has served our country and executed missions both on the training side, the test side, as well as the operational side.

What I can say about all of our ranges is that they are a national gem. They provide the capabilities for our members of the military to train in realistic conditions, to train in the way that we fight. So, that naturally relates to the size of the ranges, the nature of the ranges, the capabilities they provide, and our ability to train and test new equipment.

In my background, I have had the chance to do all three, so I will just relate to you an analogy that I would use, one that the Chairman may appreciate. Back in high school, I used to play basketball. And in our first game of the season we were preparing and practicing half-court skills to play a team from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and getting ready to play them in a really heated basketball game. So, we went down there, and what we didn't realize is that we had been training on a half court, but Eau Claire was training on a full court. In fact, they gave us a full basketball game of full court press. Naturally, we didn't win. And I use that analogy to explain to you that we need the right venues to train to be ready to execute our mission.

But I will say this. This endeavor is an endeavor in which we dare not come in second place. We need to make sure that we have the right ranges, right capabilities so that we can train, so that if and when our men and women in uniform need to train and be prepared the minute something comes up, that they have trained and been ready. So, that is something that I have had held very close to my heart because I have experienced that, and I want to make sure that our aircrew are ready to go in the future.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Assistant Secretary. Also, I know Ranking Member Grijalva's legislation would expand the range to include about 2,400 additional acres. It was in the last Congress that I made a trip out to the Fallon Naval Station, and we had the same issues there of expanding the size of the base.

Also, it is not just the land area, it is the airspace that they were going to work on getting that expanded, as well. So, I assume those issues are at play with these two bases, as well?

Dr. CHAUDHARY. That is correct, Congressman. In fact, you have to make sure, and I think that addition allows us to train more effectively, surface to 24,000 feet. As you know, airmen fight in all three dimensions, to include space. So, we have to make sure that we train to that standard, as well.

When I flew in C-17s, we needed that additional airspace to fly steep approaches that allowed us to get into the battlefield and get men and women and equipment into the battlefield quickly. So, when you don't have those airspace blocks, what that does is you need to work with the FAA, with air traffic control to de-conflict. And that can cause irritations for the traveling public, as well as disrupt training that is going on. So, when you reserve that block

of space, you are able to optimize your training and get your work done more efficiently.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you.

I will yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields.

Yes, those guys that play basketball in Eau Claire, they are pretty good. I know firsthand. And I actually do.

I am going to take 5 minutes to ask some questions here.

Assistant Secretary Chaudhary, in addition to the extension for the Goldwater Range, Ranking Member Grijalva's legislation also includes a provision clearing the title for a parcel of land to be included in an adjacent wildlife refuge. What is the Air Force's position on this part of the proposal, and does that dovetail into what Chairman Westerman was asking?

Dr. CHAUDHARY. I think it does. And what I can say to you is that it is important for us to work because there are areas in which we have to work across our agencies to find the right solutions to solve critical problems.

So, I don't have a specific answer for you on that particular parcel right now. I can take a note to get back to you in the future, and share where we are on that discussion. But that discussion continues, and we are happy to make sure that we move forward with it with an amicable solution.

Mr. TIFFANY. If you would, that would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Reynolds, I heard you use the term "discourage" in regards to the monuments here on the Mall. Why do you want to discourage them from going there?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Well, first, Mr. Chairman, we do, as was eloquently said by all of you today, support both endeavors, and would look forward to stewarding them for the American people.

It is mostly about the Reserve, under the Commemorative Works Act of 2003, saying that we would put nothing more in the Reserve. So, it is really about maintaining what is there per the law more than we want to discourage any kind of further growth of the memorials of the nation.

Mr. TIFFANY. So, it is just looking back at the law, and you are saying, as a result of them saying we are not going to put anything there, that you want to retain the status quo, is that it?

Mr. REYNOLDS. Yes, in a sense. The Mall, as you know, and we just talked about, is heavily, heavily used. So, what space we have, even though it looks blank on a map, is pretty busy. And that is the management stance that we maintain with the law.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you. I just want to share a few comments in regards to some of the discussion that has been going on here.

We can stand here as elected officials and cite being cheated by the government. We are an imperfect country. I can give you an example of being cheated by the government. Living right near Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where milk pricing used to be decided by, you got paid less with the price support program that was put in place by the Federal Government in the 1930s, you got paid less the closer you were to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. My family's farm was really close to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I could continue to be bitter about that. I have chosen not to because life moves on.

And I would point out to Members on this panel, the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, preserved the union and he released the slaves. He believed in standing up for those founding principles that were put in place. We didn't meet them for 80-plus years until Lincoln did what he did. But he did it, and it was a Republican, the very first Republican president that did that.

In the last session of Congress, we had an administration, which we all know is a Democrat administration, that openly sought to discriminate. They wrote a law, a provision in the very first bill, the very first major bill, the American Recovery Plan, that would have specifically discriminated agricultural programs based on race. They went so far as to say we are going to discriminate when issuing the COVID treatments. Is that what we want to go back to?

I hope none of us want to go back to that. We are recognizing the history of the United States of America with some of its imperfections here today. But that is who we are, an imperfect country. But we do seek to be a better country year after year, decade after decade. And I think these proposals that have been put before us today achieve that in recognizing the history of this great country, the United States of America.

I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. That concludes questioning for this panel. Thank you very much for your testimony.

We would ask for members of the third panel to come up. While the Clerk resets our witness table, I will remind the witnesses coming up that under Committee Rules, they must limit their oral statements to 5 minutes, but their entire statement will appear in the hearing record.

I would also like to remind our witnesses of the timing lights, which will turn red at the end of your 5-minute statement, and to please remember to turn on your microphone.

As with the second panel, I will allow all witnesses to testify before Member questioning.

[Pause.]

Mr. TIFFANY. It is great to have the witnesses all here, and you can see the order that we have, everyone. I am going to deviate a little bit, and I would like to recognize the gentlewoman from New York, Ms. Stefanik.

I believe you are going to do an introduction of Ms. Hill. And if you have any comments, the floor is yours.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I am so honored to be here today, and I am pleased to introduce my constituent and friend, Beth Hill, the president and CEO of the Fort Ticonderoga Association, as a witness today.

Under Beth's visionary and exceptional leadership, Fort Ticonderoga has transformed into a thriving cultural destination, offering a dynamic, multi-day visitor experience. Over the years, Beth has tackled significant preservation projects at Fort Ticonderoga, including the restoration of the national historic landmark, the 1826 Pavilion, as well as the restoration of the historic fort.

Additionally, with Beth at the helm, Fort Ticonderoga's museum holdings have grown significantly, including the acquisition of the

Robert Nittolo Collection, a collection considered to be the single most important private collection of 18th century militaria in the world.

Further, under her leadership, Fort Ticonderoga has developed a thriving learning campus through their Center for Digital History. Beth has significantly advanced Fort Ticonderoga's mission, and has played a crucial role in Fort Ticonderoga's record-breaking attendance and their significant revenue growth and donor support.

Beth's visionary leadership continues to shape the industry and create meaningful experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds who visit the fort from across the nation and globe. Today, Fort Ticonderoga, the site of America's first victory in the American Revolution, is poised to even more impactful preservation and educational work during the upcoming national 250th commemoration because of Beth's leadership.

So, I thank Beth for being here today to be willing to provide testimony at this hearing, and I look forward to hearing her remarks and learning from her expertise, and asking questions.

With that, I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. TIFFANY. Ms. Hill, you have 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF BETH HILL, PRESIDENT, THE FORT
TICONDEROGA ASSOCIATION, TICONDEROGA, NEW YORK**

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany. Thank you, Congresswoman Stefanik and esteemed Committee. I am delighted to be here today.

Fort Ticonderoga was constructed by the French on the shores of Lake Champlain in 1755, and occupied by the French, British, and American troops during the 18th century. For a generation, this remote post nestled between Lake Champlain and Lake George guarded the narrow waterway highway connecting New France and Britain's American colonies. Its very name, Ticonderoga, means land between two waters in Mohawk, identifying its strategic significance. Whichever nation controlled Ticonderoga, controlled the continent.

During the French and Indian War, Ticonderoga was the site of the bloodiest day in North American history until the Civil War. During the American Revolution, Fort Ticonderoga was the scene of America's first major victory in its struggle for independence, and it served as a United States northern stronghold, protecting New York and New England from British invasion from Canada.

The Pell family acquired the grounds in 1820, beginning the legacy of the family's preservation of the site, launching one of America's earliest private preservation efforts. Museum co-founders Sarah and Stephen Pell began the fort's restoration in 1908, the earliest of its kind in America. Their new historical vision, an expression of colonial revival, helped to shape our nation's cultural identity and remembrance, predating by a decade or more the establishment of the national parks or places such as Colonial Williamsburg.

By 1909, the first phase of the restoration of the fort was sufficiently complete for President William Howard Taft to preside at

a grand opening of the museum. Since then, more than 16 million people have visited this national historic landmark.

The Fort Ticonderoga Association was incorporated in 1931, and was designated a national historic landmark and one of the first in America. Today, Fort Ticonderoga is an independent, non-profit, educational organization, museum, and major cultural destination. The museum preserves one of North America's largest 18th century military culture collections, and includes more than 2,000 acres of historic landscape along Lake Champlain.

Battlefields across America, like Ticonderoga, hold an immense historical, cultural, and educational value. Preserving battlefield sites allows present and future generations to understand and learn from our past, ensuring that the sacrifices made and lessons learned during the conflicts are not forgotten. Non-profit educational organizations such as the Fort Ticonderoga Association, government agencies, and private individuals work together to purchase and protect these sites, often working together in critical public and private partnerships with vital funding through the American Battlefield Protection Program. The land can be safeguarded against development, ensuring its long-term preservation, collaboration among various stakeholders, and often vital for the success of battlefield preservation.

I applaud Congresswoman Stefanik for her leadership supporting important historic preservation programs, including H.R. 3448. She has been a constant champion of our nation's history. Congresswoman Stefanik recently assisted Fort Ticonderoga, ensuring that 250th funding is accessible to non-profits—and we are very grateful to you for that—in addition to government-owned sites.

H.R. 3448, the American Battlefield Program Enhancement, will help strengthen the program for years to come by allowing non-profits, tribes, and additional government entities to directly apply to ABPP grants. The American Battlefield Program Enhancement Act will ensure that the grant program is nimble and successful, maximizing its potential as a critical means of battlefield preservation.

As our nation approaches our national 250th commemoration of the American Revolution, we must take this opportunity to expand resources, mobilize partnerships, and ensure that our nation's hallowed grounds are preserved for posterity.

Thank you very much, Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hill follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BETH L. HILL, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE FORT
TICONDEROGA ASSOCIATION

ON H.R. 3448

Fort Ticonderoga was constructed by the French on the shores of Lake Champlain in 1755 and occupied by French, British, and American troops during the 18th century. For a generation this remote post nestled between Lake Champlain and Lake George guarded the narrow water highway connecting New France with Britain's American colonies. Its very name, Ticonderoga, means "land between two waters" in Mohawk, identifying its strategic significance. Whichever nation controlled Ticonderoga controlled the continent. During the French & Indian War, Ticonderoga was the site of the bloodiest day in North American history until the American Civil War (Battle of Carillon). During the American Revolution, Fort Ticonderoga was the scene of America's first major victory in its struggle for

independence, and it served as the United States' northern stronghold, protecting New York and New England from British invasion from Canada.

The Pell family acquired the grounds in 1820, beginning the legacy of the Pell family's preservation of the site, and launching one of America's earliest private preservation efforts. Museum co-founders, Sarah and Stephen Pell began the fort's restoration in 1908, the earliest of its kind in America. Their new historical vision, an expression of the Colonial Revival, helped to shape our nation's cultural identity and remembrance, pre-dating by a decade or more the establishment of the National Park Service and Colonial Williamsburg. By July 1909, the first phase of restoration was sufficiently complete for President William Howard Taft to preside at the grand opening of the museum. Since then, more than 16 million people have visited this National Historic Landmark.

The Fort Ticonderoga Association was incorporated in 1931 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961, among the first sites to earn that designation. Today Fort Ticonderoga is an independent, non-profit educational organization, museum, and major cultural destination. The museum preserves one of North America's largest collections of 18th-century military material culture and artillery, including original maps, manuscripts, military manuals, uniforms and artwork. The museum's world-renowned collections serve as the foundation for educational programs and the overall guest experience. Its historic landscape encompasses 2,000 acres of historic battlefields, gardens and the largest series of untouched 18th-century military earthworks surviving in North America, as well as two miles of shoreline on Lake Champlain.

Battlefields across America, like Ticonderoga, hold immense historical, cultural, and educational value. Preserving battlefield sites allows present and future generations to understand and learn from our past, ensuring that the sacrifices made, and lessons learned during these conflicts are not forgotten.

Non-profit organizations, such as The Fort Ticonderoga Association, government agencies, and private individuals work together to purchase and protect these sites. Often working together in a critical public-private partnership, with vital funding through the American Battlefield Protection Program, the land can be safeguarded against development, ensuring its long-term preservation. Collaboration among various stakeholders is often vital for successful battlefield preservation. Collaborative efforts can pool and leverage resources, expertise, and funding to achieve common preservation goals.

Beyond the land acquisition of historic battlefields, additional funding made possible through sources such as The American Battlefield Protection program provides critical support to interpret battlefields. These programs engage and inspire audiences of all ages. Archaeological investigations, when appropriate, provide valuable insights into the tactics, equipment, and lives of those who fought on the hallowed ground. Conservation and preservation efforts ensure that the artifacts and structures are properly documented, protected, and made available to the public for research and educational programs. Additional funding is critical to help monitor sites, maintain trails and infrastructures, manage visitor access, and implement sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact.

I applaud Congresswoman Stefanik for her leadership supporting important historic preservation programs, including sponsoring HR3448. She has been a constant champion of our nation's history. Congresswoman Stefanik recently assisted Fort Ticonderoga ensuring that 250th funding is accessible to non-profits, in addition to government owned historic sites.

H. R. 3448, The American Battlefield Program Enhancement Act, will help strengthen the program for years to come by allowing non-profits and tribes, in addition to government entities, to directly apply to ABPP grants. By expanding the eligibility for funding, the entities will be able to move quickly, often in urgent situations, to preserve endangered battlefields. This much-needed modification will make this critical program even more efficient and effective.

The Enhancement Act will allow organizations, such as The Fort Ticonderoga Association to apply directly to ABPP for grant funding, leveraging the power of individual donor and foundation support, matched by federal funding. Public/private partnerships are critical to historic preservation efforts.

The American Battlefield Program Enhancement Act will ensure that the grant program is nimble and successful, maximizing its potential as a critical means of battlefield preservation. As our nation approaches our national 250th commemoration of the American Revolution, we must take this opportunity to expand resources, mobilize partnerships, and ensure that our nation's hallowed grounds are preserved for posterity.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Ms. Hill. I now recognize the gentleman from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson, to introduce our next witness.

Mr. JOHNSON. Senator Helene Duhamel was a journalism legend before turning to public service. She was a winner of the Tom Brokaw Broadcast Award. And I, like many South Dakotans, were touched when, at the age of 29, she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's, with an infant daughter, and invited the entire state to go through the journey of her cancer treatment. And countless people were touched by that incredible journey, and she broke story after story after story.

But I know her best as a public servant representing the Black Hills of South Dakota and doing so incredibly well, having been elected by her colleagues as a majority leader, serving as Chair of Judiciary. She is just among the most thoughtful members of the South Dakota Senate. And since we are talking about Mount Rushmore, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, I would note that this is a leader with the patriotism of George Washington, the wisdom of Thomas Jefferson, the commitment to liberty of Abraham Lincoln, and the energetic leadership style of Teddy Roosevelt. And it is an honor to have her with us here today.

Mr. TIFFANY. Senator Duhamel, you have 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. HELENE DUHAMEL, SENATOR,
SOUTH DAKOTA SENATE, RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

Ms. DUHAMEL. Thank you so very much. Thank you to the Chair and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee, other members of the Committee, especially South Dakota Representative Dusty Johnson, for the opportunity to testify this morning.

My name is Helene Duhamel. I am a native of South Dakota. I currently serve as a State Senator and Majority Whip. My family goes back five generations in the region, long before South Dakota was even a State. I join you today in support of H.R. 386, the Mount Rushmore Protection Act, as introduced by Representative Johnson.

Deep in the heart of the Black Hills National Forest of South Dakota, rises a colossal sculpture carved from granite that stands as a tribute to democracy. The Mount Rushmore sculpture and its subjects, Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln, represent the first 150 years of our nation, the struggles of a young America, as well as the triumphs through determination and ability of its elected leaders.

As Americans and travelers from around the globe sought new sites in the 20th century, our state historian at the time believed that Mount Rushmore would bring new faces to South Dakota, and it did. During its carving, the sculpture visitation was approximately 400,000 a year. Today, that is about 3 million "Oh wow" moments.

I will admit that people around the world may not be able to point where South Dakota is on the map, but when you tell them that you are from the Mount Rushmore State, they know immediately.

In 1928, Representative William Williamson told his congressional colleagues the whole project is symbolic and allegorical. Washington symbolizes the founding of our country and the stability of our institutions; Jefferson, our idealism, expansion and love of liberty; Lincoln, our altruism and sense of inseparable unity; while Roosevelt typifies the soul of America, its restless energy, rugged morality, and progressive spirit. The memorial as a whole will idealize all that is best in our nation's traditions, principles, and form of government. It will symbolize maturity, stability, noble purpose, liberty of thought, and action. That was 1928 and remains today.

The Mount Rushmore Protection Act would prevent Federal funds from being used to alter or remove a name, face, or any feature from the memorial. In more than one instance, there have been discussions, whether serious or joking, about adding someone's face to Mount Rushmore. In every instance, these proposals have been rejected. Frankly, there is no more room, or good rock, for that matter, to add on to Mount Rushmore. It is a complete work of art displayed for the ages.

A more serious threat Mount Rushmore faces are calls to remove faces from the sculpture. The men carved on the mountain were not perfect, and neither is our nation's history. But these were individuals who wrestled with the great issues of their time and led America forward. Changing Mount Rushmore will not change our past.

This bill would also designate the mountains the sculpture is carved on as Mount Rushmore. This is the name recognized by the United States Board of Geographic Names since 1930, and it would ensure that any attempts to change the name by the board must have congressional approval.

The Mount Rushmore National Memorial commemorates the history and progress as a nation. In celebration of the first 150 years of America, it also stood as a gateway to a history that has not yet been written. Mount Rushmore offers opportunities for education, for enjoyment, for inspiration. It is my hope, as someone whose family has called South Dakota home for generations, that these opportunities will still be there for generations to come. It is a national treasure, and I would strongly encourage you to consider the Mount Rushmore Protection Act.

I thank the Committee once again for this opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Duhamel follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HELENE DUHAMEL, SOUTH DAKOTA STATE SENATOR
ON H.R. 386

Thank you to the Chair and Ranking Member of the subcommittee, Chair and Ranking Member of the full committee, and other members of the committee for the opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Helene Duhamel—I am a native of South Dakota, and I currently serve as a State Senator and the Majority Whip. My family goes back six generations in the region—long before South Dakota was even a state. I join you today to speak in support of H.R. 386, the Mount Rushmore Protection Act, introduced by Representative Dusty Johnson.

Deep in the heart of the Black Hills National Forest of South Dakota rises a colossal sculpture, carved from granite, that stands as a tribute to democracy. The Mount Rushmore sculpture and its subjects, Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Lincoln, represent the first 150 years of our nation—the struggles

of a young America, as well as its triumphs through the determination and ability of its elected leaders.

As Americans and travelers from around the world sought new sights in the 20th century, Doane Robinson, the state historian at the time, believed Mount Rushmore would bring new faces to South Dakota—and it did. During the carving of the sculpture, visitation was approximately 400,000 people annually. Today, an average year for visitors is approximately 3 million. I will admit that people around the world may not be able to point to where South Dakota is on a map, but they'll know the moment you say you are from the Mount Rushmore state.

In 1928, Representative William Williamson told his congressional colleagues this: “the whole project is symbolic and allegorical. Washington symbolizes the founding of our country and the stability of our institutions; Jefferson our idealism, expansion, and love of liberty; Lincoln our altruism and sense of inseparable unity; while Roosevelt typifies the soul of America—its restless energy, rugged morality, and progressive spirit. The memorial, as a whole, will idealize all that is best in our national traditions, principles, and form of government. It will symbolize maturity, stability, noble purpose, and liberty of thought and action.”

The Mount Rushmore Protection Act would prevent Federal funds from being used to alter or remove a name, face, or any other feature from the Memorial. In more than one instance, there have been discussions, whether serious or joking, about adding someone's face to Mount Rushmore. In every instance, these proposals have been rejected. Frankly, there is no more room, or good rock for that matter, to add on to Mount Rushmore. It is a complete work of art, displayed for the ages. A more serious threat Mount Rushmore faces are the calls to remove faces from the sculpture. The men carved on the mountain were not perfect, and neither is our nation's history, but these were individuals who wrestled with the great issues of their time and led America forward. Changing Mount Rushmore will not change the past.

The bill would also designate the Mountain the sculpture is carved from as “Mount Rushmore.” This is the name recognized by the United States Board of Geographic Names since 1930, and it would ensure that any attempts to change the name by the Board must have congressional approval.

The Mount Rushmore National Memorial commemorates our history and progress as a nation. In celebration of the first 150 years of America, it also stood as a gateway to a history that had not yet been written. Mount Rushmore offers opportunities for education, for enjoyment, and for inspiration. It is my hope as someone whose family has called South Dakota their home for generations that these opportunities will still be there for generations to come. I would strongly encourage consideration of the Mount Rushmore Protection Act, and I thank the committee once again for the opportunity to testify.

Thank you.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Senator Duhamel. I would like now to introduce Mr. David Duncan, the President of the American Battlefield Trust.

Mr. Duncan, you have 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID DUNCAN, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD TRUST, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. It is an honor to be here before you today. My name is David Duncan. I have the honor to be the President of the American Battlefield Trust, and I come before you today to respectfully request passage by this Committee of the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act, H.R. 3448, as introduced by Representative Stefanik.

We are a national battlefield preservation organization. Thanks to roughly 300,000 members and supporters all around the world, we have saved over the years 57,000 acres of American battlefield, hallowed ground that might have otherwise been developed,

destroyed, and denied to future generations. Those 57,000 acres are spread out over 25 united states in this country.

But we could not have performed our mission to this level of success without the support of Congress and the National Park Service, specifically the American Battlefield Protection Program, ABPP, which, working with us and other partner organizations, has helped save more than 35,000 acres of hallowed ground.

This bipartisan bill would be an accelerant to an already successful Federal program, making it even more efficient and effective in the run-up to America's 250th birthday in 2026. The American Battlefield Protection Program, a dollar-for-dollar matching grant program to preserve battlefield land outside of existing National Park Service boundaries, has been the key tool for nearly a quarter century to ensure that these hallowed grounds are preserved for generations to come.

ABPP is a program that works. It is one of the best public-private partnerships in the country. The Trust and our partners nationwide have put this program to work to preserve America's battlefields, which are irreplaceable parts of our shared national legacy. They serve as outdoor classrooms to educate current and future generations about the defining moments of our country's history. They are also living memorials not just to those soldiers who fought and died there, but to all who have worn our nation's uniform.

This bill would make four minor but critical updates to the program to make it even better.

First, it would enable non-profits and Native American tribes to apply directly for land acquisition grants. At present, non-profits like the Trust must find a government pass-through to submit the applications. This can often add months to the process, jeopardizing land transactions with willing sellers who increasingly wish to sell their properties quickly. Elimination of this hurdle would save valuable time and lessen the public staff burden.

As the reports used by the National Park Service to define battlefield core and study areas were issued back in 1993 and 2007, the second update would allow the National Park Service to modify those existing battlefield areas to include new or updated information obtained through new research, advances in technology, or archeology about the actions that took place at these sites, making these lands eligible for acquisition, interpretation, and restoration grants administered by ABPP.

Third and fourth, guarantee that these funds will be used exclusively for the preservation and restoration of high-priority battlefield land and modify the relatively new battlefield restoration grant authorized by Congress in 2019 to allow funds to be mobilized for all protected battlefields listed in the two previously mentioned National Park Service reports.

These small but important modifications to the program will ensure its readiness to preserve American historic treasures as we approach the nation's 250th birthday. These lands from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the Civil War are vital open spaces and outdoor classrooms that commemorate the sacrifices of those who fought and died on hallowed fields.

This program has enjoyed widespread support in Congress for decades, and this bill will strengthen it for many years to come.

Thank you, Chairman Tiffany. I appreciate this opportunity to testify before the Committee.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Duncan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID N. DUNCAN, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD TRUST
ON H.R. 3448

Introduction

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the subcommittee: thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is David Duncan, and I am the president of the American Battlefield Trust. I come before you today to respectfully request passage by this committee of the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act (H.R. 3448).

The American Battlefield Trust is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving America's Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War battlefields. Thanks to the generosity of our 300,000 members and supporters, the Trust has protected more than 57,000 acres of critically important battlefield land in 25 states. We could not have performed our mission without the support of Congress and the National Park Service; and specifically, the American Battlefield Protection Program.

This legislation before you today, which currently includes a bipartisan list of more than 40 co-sponsors, would take an already successful federal program, and make it even more efficient and effective, ensuring the preservation, restoration and interpretation of our nation's most hallowed grounds as an enduring legacy of the America 250 observance in 2026.

American Battlefield Protection Program

America's battlefields are irreplaceable parts of our shared national heritage. When preserved, these battlefields serve as outdoor classrooms to educate current and future generations about the defining moments in our country's history. They are living memorials, not just to the soldiers who fought and died there, but to all who have proudly worn our nation's uniform. Preserved battlefields are also economic drivers for communities, generating tourism dollars that are extremely important to state and local economies. Battlefield visitors, who typically travel in groups and as part of families, tend to stay longer and spend more than other types of tourists.

The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) has been THE key tool of the past nearly quarter century to ensure these hallowed grounds are preserved for generations to come. The program traces its origins to 1990, when Congress created the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC), which produced a report outlining the most important Civil War battlegrounds, prioritizing them according to preservation status and historic significance. In addition, the Commission also recommended that Congress establish a federal matching grant program to encourage private sector investment in battlefield preservation. In 2007, a similar report was submitted to Congress by the National Park Service (NPS), identifying the key battlefields of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. To date, ABPP's Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants have been used to preserve more than 35,000 acres of previously unprotected battlefield land from these three formative conflicts.

Enhancing a Successful Program

ABPP is a program that *works*. It is responsible for one of the best public private preservation partnerships in the country. The Trust and our partners—from Fort Ticonderoga, New York to Glorieta Pass, New Mexico; from Princeton, New Jersey to Vicksburg, Mississippi—have put this program to work to preserve battlefields from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. This bill, introduced by Representatives Elise Stefanik (NY) and Gerry Connolly (VA), would make an already nimble and effective program even stronger. And with the nation's 250th anniversary less than three years away, it is imperative we do everything we can to save the places where America was forged, including strengthening the tools at our disposal to ensure our nation's history is preserved and its stories told.

This bill would make four minor but critical updates to the program. The first modification would enable non-profits and Native American tribes to apply directly

for the land acquisition grants. At present, the only applicants for these grants are state and local public entities; nonprofits like the Trust must find a government pass through to submit the applications, which can often add months to the application process, jeopardizing land deals with willing sellers who typically wish to sell their properties quickly. State and local governments would still be eligible to apply, but the elimination of this hurdle would save time and lessen the public staff burden.

The second revision to the existing authorization would create a mechanism for NPS to modify existing core and study battlefield area boundaries to include new or updated information about the actions that took place at these sites. Periodical updates to the reports, issued in 1993 and 2007, would ensure that new, authoritative research about the historic extent of battlefields, obtained through advances in technology or archaeology since the reports were first published, can be incorporated by the NPS so that these lands would be eligible for acquisition, interpretation and restoration grants administered by ABPP.

The final two elements of this bill would guarantee that these funds will be used exclusively for the preservation and restoration of high-priority battlefield land. As written, the current ABPP statute allows land grants to be used for all sites listed in the 2007 *Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States*. This report includes not only battlefields, but non-battlefield associated sites related to these conflicts—structures, ships and other landmarks in many cases are not on battlefield land. This modification would amend the statute to limit Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to battlefield land, as the Congress intended when the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefields were added to the program in 2014, and as is currently the case for Civil War battlefields.

Finally, the bill would modify the relatively new Battlefield Restoration Grant program, authorized by Congress in 2019, to allow that program to be utilized for all protected battlefield listed in the two aforementioned reports. Current statute limits these grants, which are designed to restore battlefield lands to their wartime appearance by removing non-historic structures and reclaiming other features such as road traces and tree lines, to land saved with ABPP Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants, excluding many previously preserved sites across the country. The proposed change would allow for sites previously protected—Picacho Peak in Arizona, Brandywine Battlefield in Pennsylvania, and Sailors Creek, Virginia, to name a few—to utilize these funds, ensuring that more battlefield parks can take advantage of this valuable program to improve the interpretive experience and enable visitors to connect with American history through the power of place.

Conclusion

These small but important modifications to the American Battlefield Protection Program will ensure its readiness to preserve American historic treasures as we approach our nation's 250th birthday. The Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War were defining moments in our country's history. They are open spaces and outdoor classrooms that commemorate the sacrifices of those who fought and died on these hallowed fields.

The American Battlefield Protection Program remains an irreplaceable tool with widespread support from Congress for the past quarter century, and this bill will strengthen this program for years to come.

Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the bill. I sincerely hope you and your subcommittee will support the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act (H.R. 3448). We look forward to continuing to work closely with you as we continue our important work to preserve America's sacred battlefield lands. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Mr. Duncan.

Next, I would like to recognize Ms. Anna Laymon, the Executive Director for the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation.

You have 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF ANNA LAYMON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT FOUNDATION,
DAPHNE, ALABAMA**

Ms. LAYMON. Thank you. Good morning, distinguished members of the Committee. I am honored to be here with you today to testify in support of H.R. 1318.

We are so grateful to have bipartisan and bicameral support, including the support of many of our co-sponsors, many of whom are here today, and the support of the six living first ladies who are graciously serving together as honorary Chairs of the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation.

I would also like to thank the members of the Girl Scouts Capitol Region who are here with us today, sitting behind me to watch history in the making and be a part of the legislative process that the suffragists fought so hard to be a part of.

There are two simple yet history-defining questions at the heart of today's hearing. As we approach the celebration of 250 years of American democracy, is there room for the great women of American history in the heart of the National Mall?

And does the addition of a monument to the women's suffrage movement uphold and enhance the integrity of the National Mall?

Our answer to both questions is, unequivocally, yes.

The National Mall, which is the most visited national park in the United States with 36 million annual visitors, is our nation's foremost commemorative space. Its significance, both symbolically in its embodiment of our country's ideals, and physically as the land that holds our national memory, cannot be overstated.

But the story told on the National Mall is not yet complete. Walking the grounds of the Mall today, you will encounter war memorials and monuments honoring civil rights heroes and past presidents. You will stand in awe of the giants who have earned their place in our national story. But you won't see the great women of American history like suffragist Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, and Sojourner Truth, whose bravery shaped our democracy.

Of the 40 commemorative works in the Reserve, 22, that is, 55 percent, are dedicated to singular men. Ten are dedicated to military veterans and war history, three to foreign nations, two to private organizations, one to America's postal history, one to America's canal history, and one to the history of horses on the National Mall. Zero of the forty commemorative works in the Reserve are dedicated to American women's history. Amongst our most iconic monuments and memorials, American women's stories are missing.

But is there space for a new memorial on the National Mall? The Reserve measures 1,030 acres. Of those 1,030 acres, 699 acres are green space. To commemorate the role of 51 percent of the population in building, securing, and expanding our nation's democracy, we are asking for 1 acre, 1 out of 699.

The National Park Service has testified today that, although women are important, we are not important enough to hold space on the National Mall. They have told every woman and girl in the United States that, although there are 699 acres of green space in the Reserve, by asking for 1 acre, we are simply asking for too

much. I could let that bother me, or I could remember the lessons learned from the suffragists and their fight for the 19th Amendment.

History is made in these halls, and history is written by the people's branch.

Today is July 13, 2023. And while I am not usually a person who looks for signs, every once in a while the universe knocks so loudly you have to sit up and listen. Exactly 175 years ago on this date in 1848, 5 women—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Jane Hunt—gathered together on an unusually hot day in upstate New York for a tea.

With the windows open and nearly a dozen children running around their skirts, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who was just 32 years old that summer, posed two questions to the women gathered around her that would change the course of American history: Hadn't the Revolutionary War been fought just 70 years earlier to win the right to self-governance for every American; shouldn't it be that, in this new and great nation, one truth should be held self-evident, that all men and women are created equal?

The women's suffrage movement began 175 years ago today around a table in Waterloo, when five young mothers decided that they would fight for the ideals of freedom, justice, and equality so central to the founding of our Republic. They did not know then that their fight would take 72 years. They did not know then that not one of the women around the table that day would live to see the ratification of the 19th Amendment, but they prayed that their children would. And as every parent knows, that was enough hope to catalyze the longest and largest political movement in American history.

If the room feels different today, it is surely because our foremothers are here, standing tall beside us with the certainty that, because of this Committee's leadership, every little girl who visits our nation's capital will soon see the diverse heroes of American women's history, where they have always belonged: in the monumental core of the National Mall.

So, I return to those two simple yet history-defining questions at the heart of today's hearing. On the cusp of America's 250th, will we finally welcome the great women of American history to the National Mall?

And does the addition of a monument to the women's suffrage movement uphold and even enhance the integrity of our nation's foremost commemorative space?

Again, our answer to both questions is, unequivocally, yes.

We thank you sincerely for your consideration of H.R. 1318.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Laymon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNA LAYMON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
 NATIONAL MONUMENT FOUNDATION
 ON H.R. 1318

Good morning, Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and all the Members of Congress here today. I am honored to be here with you to testify in support of H.R. 1318.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the six living First Ladies, Mrs. Carter, Secretary Clinton, Mrs. Bush, Mrs. Obama, Mrs. Trump, and Dr. Biden, for serving together as the Honorary Chairs of the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation.

There are two simple yet history-defining questions at the heart of today's hearing: is there room for the great women of American history in the heart of the National Mall, in the area known as Reserve; and does the addition of a monument to the women's suffrage movement uphold and enhance the integrity of the National Mall? Our answer to both questions is, unequivocally, yes.

The National Mall, which is the most visited National Park in the United States with 36 million annual visitors, is our Nation's foremost commemorative space. Its significance—both symbolically in its embodiment of our country's ideals and physically as the land that holds our national memory—cannot be overstated.

But the story told on the National Mall is not yet complete. Walking the grounds of the Mall today, you will encounter war memorials and monuments honoring civil rights heroes and past presidents. You will stand in awe of the giants who have earned their place in our national story. But you won't see the great women of American history whose bravery shaped our democracy.

Of the 40 commemorative works in the Reserve, 22 (55%) are dedicated to singular men. 10 are dedicated to military veterans and war history, three to foreign relations, two to private organizations, one to America's postal history, one to America's canal history, and one to the history of horses on the National Mall. *Zero* of the 40 commemorative works in the Reserve are dedicated to American women's history. Amongst our most iconic monuments and memorials, American women's stories are missing (*see Appendix A*).

But is there space for a new memorial on the National Mall?

The Reserve measures 1,030 acres. Of those 1,030 acres, 699 acres are greenspace. To commemorate the role of 51% of the population in building, securing, and expanding our Nation's democracy, we are asking for one acre. One acre out of 699 (*see Appendix A*).

The National Park Service has testified today that although women are important, we are not important enough to hold space on the National Mall. They have told every woman and girl in the United States that although there are 699 acres of green space in the Reserve, by asking for one acre, we are simply asking for too much.

I could let that bother me. Or, I could remember the lessons learned from the suffragists and their fight for the 19th Amendment. History is made in these halls. And history is written by the people's branch.

Today is July 13, 2023. And while I am not usually a person who looks for signs, every once in a while, the universe knocks so loudly, you have to sit up and listen. Exactly 175 years ago on this date in 1848, five women—Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Jane Hunt—gathered together on an unusually hot day for a quiet tea in Upstate New York. With the windows open and nearly a dozen children running around their skirts, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who was just 32 years old that summer, posed two questions to the women gathered around her that would change the course of American history: hadn't the Revolutionary War been fought just 70 years earlier to win the right to self-governance for *every* American? Shouldn't it be that in this new and great Nation, one truth should be self-evident, that all men *and women* are created equal?

The women's suffrage movement began 175 years ago today, around a table in Waterloo, when five young mothers decided that they would fight for the ideals of freedom, justice, and equality so central to the founding of our Republic. They did not know then that their fight would take 72 more years. They did not know then that not one of the women around the table that day would live to see the ratification of the 19th Amendment. But they prayed that their children would. And as every parent knows, that was enough hope to catalyze the longest and largest political movement in American history.

If the room feels different today, it's surely because our foremothers are here, standing tall beside us, with the certainty that because of this committee's leadership, every little girl who visits our Nation's Capital will soon see the heroes of American women's history where they have always belonged—in the monumental core of the National Mall.

And so, I return to those two simple yet history-defining questions at the heart of today's hearing. Is there room for the great women of American history in the Reserve? And does the addition of a monument to the women's suffrage movement uphold and even enhance the integrity of the National Mall? Again, our answer to both questions is, unequivocally, yes.

We thank you, sincerely, for your consideration of H.R. 1318.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you, Ms. Laymon. I would like to recognize the gentleman from Utah for an introduction.

Mr. Moore.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse. It is my honor, my distinct honor today to introduce a distinguished witness who exemplifies the epitome of bravery and selflessness: Command Master Chief Britt Kelly Slabinski.

Command Master Chief Slabinski has displayed a commitment to public service for his entire life. Whether in the Boy Scouts of America or the U.S. Navy, he has shown all who know him what it means to put country first. It was during his time in the Navy that he performed acts of extraordinary valor, bravery, and courage that led him to being awarded the Medal of Honor.

I encourage everyone to read and be inspired by his official Medal of Honor citation. And while not to distract from his presence today, these citations across the 3,500 individuals, one of the most rare things we award, should be broadly communicated to our nation. That is partly what we are here to do today.

Command Master Chief Slabinski continues to serve his nation as a board member for the Medal of Honor Museum Foundation, which works today to inspire America to its true character and leadership potential one hero at a time. It is an honor to introduce him and hear from him about the important work we are engaged in to build a monument befitting of him, others, and the entire Medal of Honor.

Thank you for this opportunity, and I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Slabinski, you have 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF BRITT SLABINSKI, MASTER CHIEF, UNITED STATES NAVY, RETIRED, ARLINGTON, TEXAS

Master Chief SLABINSKI. Good morning. Thank you to the Chairman and Ranking Member, as well as all members of this Committee for your time this morning and for your thoughtful consideration of H.R. 2717.

I also want to thank Congressmen Moore and Veasey, who are the bipartisan co-sponsors of this important legislation.

It is a privilege to be here today speaking in support of a piece of legislation named in honor of an individual I knew well and admired both for his service in uniform and, more importantly, for all the ways he continued to serve his nation as a private citizen.

From the moment we met, Woody Williams and I shared a special bond. In fact, after he passed and laid in honor right next door in the Capitol as the last Medal of Honor recipient from World

War II, his family entrusted me with his Medal of Honor rosette, which I wear today, and am pleased that several members of Woody's family are here with us today.

Wearing this rosette doesn't just remind me of my good friend and his service to our country, it is also a testament to the idea that the Medal of Honor doesn't belong to a person or even a generation. It is a torch passed through time. The values represented by the medal transcend time and place, reaching all the way from its creation by President Lincoln 160 years ago until today.

The Medal of Honor is a reminder for all of us that the people can accomplish seemingly impossible things. We all have the potential within us to be extraordinary. It is the same spirit the monument we are asking you to provide space for on the National Mall is not a monument to valor, or even to the 3,516 individuals who received the Medal of Honor. It is a monument to the enduring values which motivate a citizen-soldier to risk their life for those around them, a teacher to talk a student with a gun out of committing a horrible act, a first responder to run into the flames instead of away from them, or a young person to stand up for a peer being bullied in the schoolyard.

The Medal of Honor has never been about those who wear it. In fact, we wear it not for ourselves, but for all those who served alongside us and, most importantly, wear it for those who never made it home. The Medal of Honor is a symbol. It is the embodiment of the ideals that built our nation, it is an aspiration of our still more forming perfect union. It is a reminder of the responsibility all Americans have to serve one another and the greater good.

When President Lincoln created the Medal of Honor in 1861 and awarded the first medals in 1863, he knew the challenge of keeping our country whole would require incredible sacrifice. He also knew raising the nation's collective gaze to the horizon of things which unite us would be of paramount importance both during the war and after.

There is nothing more uniting than the shared human values represented by the Medal of Honor: courage and sacrifice; commitment and integrity; citizenship and patriotism. The connections between President Lincoln and the Medal of Honor stretch far between the creation of the medal itself. The work of preserving and protecting our nation has continued at home and abroad for over a century-and-a-half since the medal was created, as every generation of Americans have confronted the challenge of our time with the same courage and commitment as Lincoln himself.

The Medal of Honor is the nexus of all of this enduring work to keep the American experiment alive. It is an undeniable component of Lincoln's enduring legacy and our American story. This monument is a way for Lincoln's voice of reason to continue gently whispering into the future, admonishing us to focus on the things which unite us and on our shared values.

We have requested this monument be built attached to or within 1,000 feet of Lincoln Memorial, because it will stand humbly and respectfully as a guard over his legacy and the ideals that held our country together. It will also complete an unfinished work.

The original plans for the Lincoln Memorial extend its footprint to the edge of the Reflecting Pool with two additional components. I believe you have each seen a copy of this, of the century-old plan. For reasons unknown, the final pieces were never built. With work presently underway to improve and preserve the Lincoln Memorial, we believe there is no better time to revisit the original intent and in the most deferential of ways to create a lasting physical representation of the bond between Lincoln and the Medal of Honor.

It was 160 years ago this December Lincoln wrote the words, "Honor to the sailor and soldier everywhere who bravely bears this country's burden, and honor to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves as best we can the same cause." Over the course of many years working on this project, we have often been asked how it is possible nothing like it ever exists. The only reasonable answer is that America needs it now more than ever.

We live in seemingly divided times, and I am proud to be here in front of a Congress which unanimously approved the National Medal of Honor Monument Act. You have proved to the nation there are things upon which we can agree. There are topics which raise to a level of national importance requiring us to set aside partisan differences and be reminded of our shared values and common cause.

The Medal of Honor has been awarded in every war and conflict since the Civil War. There are recipients from every branch of the military. The medal is awarded regardless of race, gender, religion, or any other differentiating factor. And while fewer than 4,000 have earned the privilege of wearing the medal, the medal is worn for the 40 million citizens who have served in the United States Armed Forces over 160 years.

More importantly still, the medal is presented and worn to remind us all of the work of finding common ground, of service above self, and being a hero to those around us in everyday life never ends. This monument will be a beacon pointing us all to a purpose above and beyond any divisions of today and tomorrow, reminding us not of valor, but of values, courage and sacrifice, commitment and integrity, citizenship and patriotism.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Master Chief Slabinski follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT, MASTER CHIEF BRITT
SLABINSKI
ON H.R. 2717

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In this same spirit, the Monument we are asking you to provide space for on the National Mall is not a monument to valor or even to the 3,516 individuals who received the Medal of Honor. It is a monument to the enduring values which motivate a citizen soldier to risk their life for those around them, a teacher to talk a student with a gun out of committing a horrible act, a first responder to run into flames instead of away from them, or a young person to stand up for a peer being bullied in the school yard.

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Fellow Medal of Honor recipient and United States President Teddy Roosevelt once said, *“The lives of truest heroism are those in which there are no great deeds to look back upon. It is the little things well done that go to make up a truly successful and good life.”*

Woody Williams embodied this. Before Woody created his foundation to honor Gold Star families, most Americans were unfamiliar with the term or the tremendous sacrifice it represents. Today, because of Woody's tireless efforts, there are more than 100 Gold Star Family Memorials around the United States with 100 more planned. These memorials raise awareness for what has been given for our country.

I would be remiss, if I didn't acknowledge that we have some of Woody's family here with us today.

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This monument will be a beacon pointing us all to a purpose above and beyond any divisions of today or tomorrow—reminding us not of valor, but of values: courage and sacrifice, commitment and integrity, citizenship and patriotism.

Thank you.

Mr. TIFFANY. Thank you for comments. Thank you to each of you for your testimony. We are now going to take time for questions from our Members.

First, Ms. Stefanik, you have 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany, and I want to thank Chairman Westerman for convening today's hearing on this important legislative package highlighting my bipartisan bill, the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act.

As noted in my introduction, my district is home to numerous important battlefields in American history, including Fort Ticonderoga, but also Fort Anne and the Bennington Battlefield, as well. And I am also proud to serve as co-Chair of the bipartisan Battlefield Caucus.

I like to consider New York's 21st District as the cradle of the American Revolution. I grew up going to these battlefields and historic sites across my district, including the fort, and I am honored to lead this bipartisan legislation to ensure our many battlefields across the country are preserved. Protecting these battlefields is essential for creating rich educational programming for students, and opening up this experience to tourists.

The American Battlefield Protection Program provides critical support to our nation's battlefield, and is one of the most successful land preservation programs managed by the National Park Service. Since its conception, the American Battlefield Protection Program has helped protect more than 100 battlefields in 42 states, and protect battlefield lands at 110 battlefield sites in 19 states.

With the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution approaching, streamlining this program and ensuring that it is effective and more efficient is more important than ever. This is why my legislation is so important, to make significant modifications to strengthen this program for years to come. It makes four small but critical modifications.

First, it allows non-profits and tribes to apply to the American Battlefield Protection Program directly, instead of going through a state or local government.

Secondly, it ensures that the grant funding can be used on priority battlefields in addition to land that has been preserved using funding.

Additionally, the bill would clarify eligibility of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 sites for battlefield land acquisition grants. That is so important for a district like mine, and New England in general.

And lastly, this legislation creates a process for the National Park Service to modify existing core and study battlefield area boundaries to include new or updated findings. We are learning more and more history every single day.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan bill.

And my question is for Ms. Hill and Mr. Duncan. How would this legislation, and I know you touched on it broadly, but how would it impact both your work at the Trust, Mr. Duncan, but also the work you do leading the helm at Fort Ticonderoga, Ms. Hill?

Beth, you go first.

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Congresswoman Stefanik.

As I mentioned, Fort Ticonderoga is owned and operated by the Fort Ticonderoga Association, which is a non-profit educational organization. With this change, Fort Ticonderoga would be able to apply directly for grant fundings as properties become available surrounding the site.

Ticonderoga, really, the whole community, is a historic landscape. So, as land opens up for sale around Fort Ticonderoga and the potential of the acquisition, this would streamline the process, enable us to apply for the funding, and then implement the acquisition to protect the land forever. Thank you.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Representative Stefanik.

For us, the word of the day in battlefield land preservation is "urgency." We are currently in competition with some of the best capitalized entities in the world, corporations, in many cases, with worldwide renown and, quite candidly, unlimited funds with which to approach landowners to purchase their property.

So, every day we can shave off of the process so that when we are dealing with a willing seller, and I want to make that very clear, we only deal with willing sellers, we pay fair market value for people's property, but every day we can shave off of that process makes it more likely we are going to be able to save that piece of battlefield ground.

If we have to tell a landowner that because of delays in getting a grant, or just the long process, that we are not going to be able to buy your property for 6, 9, 12 months, it is going to be very, very difficult for them to turn away those offers that are coming at them from these other entities that are oftentimes offering far above market value.

So, being able to apply directly for us and save, in some instances, months of that time is huge, hugely important to our overall mission.

Ms. STEFANIK. Well, thank you both for your testimony.

Again, it is an honor to have you here, Beth, as a constituent and as the leader of Fort Ticonderoga Association.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill. Thank you.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlelady yields. Next, Ms. Kamlager-Dove, you have 5 minutes for questions.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I have a couple of questions for both Ms. Laymon, and then also for Senator Duhamel.

Ms. Laymon, you mentioned the convention at Seneca Falls, which, by the way, no Black women were invited. Your testimony did state that Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Jane Hunt are the pioneers of the women's suffrage movement, but didn't include women like Ida B. Wells, Dr. Mabel Lee, or Sarah Garnet.

And I would also like to add last night I viewed some original documents signed by Frederick Douglass on slavery, and an additional signature on that document at the National Archives was of Mary Church Terrell, also incredibly important to this discussion.

And if I might add, since so many of us have been talking about Lincoln, I viewed Lincoln's letters about slavery, his concerns about abolishing it, the Emancipation Proclamation and general order number 3, also known as Juneteenth, which actually delayed the Emancipation Proclamation's authorization. I might add that the Juneteenth bill was signed into law by President Biden, and opposed by a number of my colleagues from across the aisle, including some on this very Committee. So, as we talk about Lincoln and history, it is important to say all of that.

So, to the question, Ms. Laymon, how is the Foundation planning to include the contributions of non-White women?

Ms. LAYMON. Thank you, Congresswoman. That is an excellent question. An excellent and very important question, and one I would add that maybe every single one of our stakeholders has asked me.

Going back to 2020, I was the Executive Director of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, which was the small Federal agency that Congress established to help coordinate and commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. And in that centennial and the work that we did, I would say the thing I am most proud of is ensuring that all of our projects, all of our efforts, all of our partnerships were committed to telling a full story, a complete story, and weaving women's stories together in this work that we did in a way that celebrated what these women achieved, but didn't ignore the hard histories that are very, very real in this story of the 19th Amendment and the story of the women's suffrage movement.

We are very committed to lifting all women out of the footnotes of history, and very committed to lifting all women into this shared American story that we tell on the National Mall.

Our history is an imperfect history. That has been said today, I think very eloquently, by several Members here on this Committee. And we take this very seriously. This is an imperfect movement for change, but it is an important movement for change. Those leaders that you just mentioned are American heroes, and their stories deserve to be told and represented on the National Mall. That is what this monument will do.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Thank you. And hopefully, if this is passed and enacted, there will also be women building it, as well.

So, State Senator, as someone with generational ties to the region of Black Hills, South Dakota, I am sure you can appreciate the Sioux Nation's disapproval of Black Hills being removed from the Great Sioux Reservation. How is the South Dakota State Legislature planning to address the concerns of the Lakota Tribe?

Ms. DUHAMEL. Mr. Chairman, I don't think it is being taken up in the South Dakota Legislature at this time. We are right here today talking about the Mount Rushmore Protection Act.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Right. They are also a part of this discussion because their concerns that the Mount Rushmore National Memorial serves as a reminder of cultural abuse enacted on their ancestors.

Ms. DUHAMEL. The Mount Rushmore National Monument shows men who are depicted from the past, men who are not perfect, but neither is our nation's history. And they brought us to a place for a more perfect union. But this is settled law. The United States, the highest law of the land, the Supreme Court in 1980, ruled on this issue. They decided United States versus Sioux Nation of Indians 1980. They didn't give the land back. They made an award of \$106 million. And that now is in the billions of dollars, and it is settled law.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. All right, thank you for that, Mr. Chair. I just want to say that there is irony for me, sitting here looking up, looking at the makeup of this panel talking about the telling of the history of our country. Diversity is certainly important.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlelady yields. I would like to recognize the Chairman, Mr. Westerman.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you, Chairman Tiffany. And, again, thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Mr. DUNCAN, in your testimony you made me feel a little bit old because I remember the bicentennial celebration, and now we are looking at 250 years. I will say I was a small child during the bicentennial celebration, but definitely old enough to remember it.

And as America approaches the 250-year celebration in 2026, can you talk about how the projected increases in battlefield visitations and how Congresswoman Stefanik's legislation can help the nation's battlefields as we look forward to these celebrations?

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, absolutely.

We, as an organization, a private, non-profit organization, have actually established a goal in conjunction with the National Park Service that, again, with their partnership, and in conjunction with the American Battlefield Protection Program, we are seeking to preserve a total of 2,500 acres of Revolutionary War battlefield land. This is, again, in addition to the tens of thousands of acres from primarily the Civil War, but also the War of 1812 that has been preserved over the years.

I am very much of the mind that this will be one of the most important periods of commemoration, I think, in all of our lifetimes. Like you, I was a very young boy in 1976, but I do remember it well. It is a tremendous opportunity to get people out onto the sites where this country's history was created and defined, created during the early conflicts and defined during the later ones.

There is a historic benefit, there is an education benefit. There is a tremendous power of place. We have seen that. I have been in this preservation business now for more than 23 years, and I have heard that from people all across the country. They say, well, I read a book, or I saw a movie, and that was nice, but when I went to the battlefield I felt something. And I think that is a very real manifestation of that power of place. So, there is education, there is history.

By the way, this doesn't get talked about nearly as often as it should, but there is also an economic benefit, as well. I am sure my colleague, Beth, here from Fort Ticonderoga, can attest to that. A properly preserved and interpreted battlefield will attract the highest level of heritage tourists that there is. They tend to come to these sites, stay longer, and spend more. So, for a community that has a preserved site like this, 3 million people going to the Black Hills, people coming to Washington to see new monuments on the Mall, there is a tremendous economic benefit as well.

So, we are really looking forward to channeling all of that into this energy over the next 3 years.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Also in Representative Stefanik's bill she allows direct participation of tribes and non-profit organizations in the protection program for the battlefields. This is something that is a priority of mine, and something we have worked hard on at this Committee, is to get more tribal involvement. We have done that through the Good Neighbor Authority managing our forest. We are working on a program with Fish and Wildlife Service to have kind of a Good Neighbor Authority for that. And I would consider this a Good Neighbor Authority for helping with our battlefields.

But can you please talk about how including tribal and private partners can help strengthen the level of protection?

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, I think it is a situation where, again, the more people we have involved in historic preservation, the better it is going to be for everyone.

Currently, our areas of focus are, as I say, the three main conflicts of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the Civil War. There has certainly been some discussion that we might look to other conflicts either before those conflicts or later, but we haven't moved very far on that to this point.

Mr. WESTERMAN. And I want to ask Master Chief Slabinski a question with the remaining time I have.

And as Mr. Moore mentioned, this bill passed on the Floor unanimously when we first did the Medal of Honor Monument. And it seems to be the only ones opposed to it right now are the Park Service. But as a veteran, what kind of message do you think that sends to you and fellow veterans when the Park Service takes these stances?

Master Chief SLABINSKI. Well, the bill was passed unanimously. It gives me a tremendous sense of hope when we saw the results come back. And I wanted to thank all of you for that. And we came back to say, look, the DNA of so many others is embedded inside this medal, and everyone recognizes that. And to bring everyone together, it just gave me a sense of that, hey, we are going to be OK.

I know the Park Service. The Park Service is just doing what you asked them to do, right? They are following through on that. If you tell them, hey, we want to change that, they will follow through on that. They are just doing what you asked them to do, is the way I look at it. For us, we are just asking you, hey, let's be on this mission here to try to inspire America a little bit more with the creation of this monument.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields.

Representative Stauber, you have 5 minutes.

Mr. STAUBER. Thank you very much.

Ms. Hill, just to let you know, in the early 1990s I rented a home on Glen Lake when I was playing professional hockey, so northern Minnesota and upstate New York have similar features and great people.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be co-sponsor of the bipartisan Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act, and would like to thank my colleague from Utah, Mr. Moore, for his leadership in introducing this legislation.

Last Congress, I was proud to support the legislation that authorized the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to honor our Medal of Honor recipients by establishing a memorial to them in our nation's capital. And I support that memorial being built on the National Mall. The National Mall here in Washington is akin to America's backyard. It belongs to the American people, and is a way for us to celebrate this great nation and everything it stands for.

That is why it is fitting to establish a National Medal of Honor memorial on the National Mall to honor those who have sacrificed on our behalf, and to honor President Lincoln's establishment of the National Medal of Honor. It is only appropriate that such a memorial be sitting in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial.

Master Chief Slabinski, I want to thank you for your service. The men and women like you who wore the uniform of this country and sacrificed for all of us should be celebrated. I want to thank you for your advocacy on behalf of your fellow Medal of Honor recipients today. I am proud to support this legislation and honor the men and women like you and Woody Williams. It is vital that we support this memorial to ensure all Americans can learn about the sacrifices you have all made on behalf of this great nation.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields. Next, Mrs. Kiggans, you have 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIGGANS. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning. Thank you to all of our panelists for being here and taking the time to talk through these important issues with us.

I am happy to be a co-sponsor of several of my colleagues' bills being discussed today, and I wanted to take a few minutes to express my support to the panel. Although I don't have questions, I really just wanted to speak in support of all of you.

First, I want to thank my colleague, Representative Neguse, for introducing this bill to place the monument to women's suffrage on the National Mall. As a female Member of Congress who would not be sitting here today without the women voters of Virginia's 2nd

District, I want to emphasize the profound importance of women's suffrage to our democracy, and to advocate passionately for the need to commemorate this pivotal moment in our history.

As a female Navy pilot who was inspired to enter a career in military aviation in the same year that women were allowed to fly in combat, I appreciate and recognize the importance of honoring and remembering milestones that women have achieved throughout our nation's history. I am a believer of recognizing and remembering, and then getting to work, and let those monuments speak for themselves.

But honoring the women's suffrage movement with a monument, especially one on some of the most revered Federal land in our country, is a powerful statement. This monument will serve as a reminder of the struggles endured and the progress achieved. So, thank you, Ms. Laymon, for being here today and for your tireless work seeing this project through.

Secondly, I wanted to thank Master Chief Slabinski for testifying before this Committee, and just for speaking so eloquently about the reason that we have a Congressional Medal of Honor, and what it symbolizes to our country, the need for patriotism today. It is the reason I ran for Congress, so it is an honor to have you here with us. And you visited my office as well, so I appreciate that. And when you came to my office you spoke on behalf of H.R. 2717, which is before the Committee today.

Since its creation 160 years ago, like you said, over 3,500 individuals have received the Medal of Honor. And every week in my newsletter that we put out to my constituents, we highlight a Medal of Honor winner of the week. It is something that I feel passionately about. I want all of those stories to be told. So, we all have different things we incorporate on a weekly basis in our newsletters, but that is mine. It is an honor to be able to help co-sponsor that bill to honor those who have fought for this country and inspire future warriors to continue their legacy.

The Medal of Honor holds an exalted place in American history, and honoring the extraordinary heroism displayed by the few service members awarded the Medal of Honor should be a top priority. I can think of no better place for this monument than next to that of President Lincoln, who established the award after 160 years of extraordinary achievement. And it is finally time to inscribe the names of these heroes in the National Mall.

As a final tribute to the recipients of the Medal of Honor, I would like to recount one of the many stories of gallantry that stood out to me. The first Medal of Honor recipient from Virginia Beach, my district, is Sergeant James Miller. He was born into slavery in what was then Princess Anne County in 1829. In 1863, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, and he participated in the Battle of New Market Heights in 1864 during the Civil War in modern-day Henrico County, Virginia. During the battle, Sergeant James was shot in the arm and he had an emergency amputation. During this time he continued to lead his troops in battle, loading and discharging his weapons one-handed, urging his men forward, and refusing to be taken from the field. He died in 1871 of complications from injuries sustained in combat.

I went to a dinner with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society when I first came to Congress, and met so many recipients. And we had a speaker who was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. My dad served in Vietnam as a Green Beret, and we frequently remember his friends who were lost during that war. But this particular gentleman, a Medal of Honor winner who spoke, he said, "Every day we got up and we flew missions in Vietnam. And we did the same thing every day. But one day people paid attention, and I got this medal."

So, that really made an impression on me, and a statement. People don't wake up and say, "I am going to wake up and win the Congressional Medal of Honor today." These are just ordinary people who wake up, and they make extraordinary choices that make our country great, and allow us the privilege just to be here and, for me, the privilege of being able to serve in Congress, and for us to all live in the greatest country in the world.

So, thank you to Sergeant James, who I spoke about, to Master Sergeant Slabinski, and to the many other incredible service members who have been awarded the Medal of Honor. We owe them debts that we can never repay, and this memorial is an important step in recognizing their sacrifices.

And I yield back.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentlewoman yields, and thank you for your service.

I think earlier we had a comment from one of our Members in regards to the makeup of the panel. I would just point out that, as we go through this hearing, we have no one on the other side of the aisle that is here at this point, which is really unfortunate. And the Minority had the ability to be able to call another witness here. If they wanted someone from the Lakota Sioux Tribe, they could have brought that person here, or someone that represented that viewpoint. They could have been here on this panel, and they chose not to do that.

Next, I would like to recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Hunt. You have 5 minutes for questions. Mr. Hunt, are you ready?

Mr. HUNT. I was born ready.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HUNT. Thank you so much. And I also want to thank you all for being here. I greatly appreciate it.

Sir, I was able to meet you and many of your colleagues earlier this year. We listen to your stories, listen to your sacrifices, and what you have done, and how much we definitely need the National Medal of Honor Monument. We discussed this in depth, and it is something that our Committee has control over. We can help you, sir, and also the brave patriots across this country and the consummate professionals that wish to educate all Americans, regardless of age, race, origin, or religion, about the values of this country and the importance of freedom that we have here and abroad. And what we are able to provide for others abroad is critical. That knowledge is critical.

I am not sure if you all know this, but I am also a co-sponsor for legislation that makes July American Pride Month. And we take a day every single day in the month of July to talk about the values of this country, the history of this country, where we have

come from, and where we are, and not necessarily to lament on the past or the things that we haven't done right, for every single culture has a checkered and chartered past. But we, as a country, because of brave men like you, are why we get to call ourselves the land of the free and the home of the brave. And monuments like this can serve as a constant reminder as to why our future is bright because of brave people that are willing to serve it.

And also, our posterity depends on the fact that we fight for these values every single day. And there is some kind of representation to understand that.

I am a West Point grad, and you walk around West Point all day, every day. There are monuments, and the buildings and the barracks are named after prominent people like MacArthur and like Eisenhower. And of course, there is General Patton. And General Patton's statue is placed in front of the library. And it is ironic, because apparently he graduated last in his class, so he never spent a day in the library.

And I also spent time in Robert E. Lee Barracks, the Confederate general that fought against the rights of people that looked like me. And I love the name of those barracks because it represents progress. And we are not defined by names on buildings; we are defined by our history. And what we can do is talk about the progress of then, and where we are right now.

So, sir, my question is for you. If you don't mind, would you mind explaining to the Committee and those that are watching this hearing why Congress should get this monument done, and why we should get it done now?

Master Chief SLABINSKI. Sir, thank you for your service, I was privileged to serve the country by your side.

We—I say we, as a nation—we have 65 living recipients left to the Medal. Possibly 66 coming with the President announcing a new one coming here soon. It is still not a lot, down considerably from our 400 that we had back from World War II. So, it is critical now to get those stories out.

I can tell you one story is I was at an event just recently where another recipient, an Army recipient, was speaking from Vietnam. And I tell you, his comments, when I was listening to him, I felt inspired from him, listening to his comments, and I was like, wow. I mean, those stories, they are not lost on me, and they are still inspiring me. But soon we won't have those stories.

Mr. HUNT. Yes.

Master Chief SLABINSKI. And we will need places where people can go, just like some of our monuments that you have on the Mall now.

But this isn't about war, this is about values. This is about tools to make decisions when decisions are hard to come by. And we all face them every day. That is what this monument is about, giving the people that will visit some tools to help them make decisions so we can further build upon our experiment. So, we need it now.

Mr. HUNT. As a military guy, every time I am encountered by gentlemen like you and the Medal that you wear around your neck, for those that don't understand that, he is rare. He is wearing the history of this country. It is just a level of reverence that you have earned, and there is a level of reverence that we owe you.

And I always talk about why we live in the greatest country in the world. And by the way, on our worst day, in spite of a lot of the strife and anguish that we might see, on our worst day this is the greatest country in the world. If we cannot have monuments like this as a sort of reminder that, in spite of all the fighting and the strife and a lot of the disagreements that happened right here in this room on a relatively regular basis, if we can't have a rallying cry to remember that this is exactly who we are, and that is what this is about, then we have other problems.

If we could spend billions of dollars in other countries, I can assure you that we can get this done as a reminder to those in the future just what the foundation of this country is all about so we could actually have a future as an American.

I am honored by your presence. I am honored by your service. And thank you all so much for being here today. I really appreciate it.

Mr. TIFFANY. The gentleman yields?

Mr. HUNT. I yield. Yes, sir. I yield back the rest of my time.

Mr. TIFFANY. I would like to thank all of you for your testimony and thank you, Members, for your questions. But thank you so much for making the trip that you did to come here to Washington, DC to share your information.

Members of the Subcommittee may have some additional questions for you, and we will ask that you respond to those in writing.

Under Committee Rule 3, members of the Subcommittee must submit questions to the Subcommittee Clerk by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 18, 2023. The hearing record will be held open for 10 business days for those responses.

If there is no further business, without objection, the Subcommittee on Federal Lands stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[ADDITIONAL MATERIALS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD]

Statement for the Record
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
on H.R. 4377

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this Statement for the Record on H.R. 4377, which would amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-65) to extend an existing military withdrawal and reservation for the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR) in southwestern Arizona until October 5, 2049.

The bill would also expand BMGR by authorizing the Gila Bend Addition, which would add 2,366 acres of BLM-managed public lands in Maricopa County, Arizona (referred to as the Gila Bend Addition) to the range. Lastly, the bill would provide clarifying language for the status of the remaining Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986 lands along the BMGR perimeter, revoke legacy World War II-era military withdrawals, and provide for the transfer of a 21-acre parcel managed by the United States Air Force (USAF) and located within the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and Cabeza Prieta Wilderness Area to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The Department supports H.R. 4377, as the bill's provisions match the proposed withdrawal and expansion jointly developed by USAF and the United States Marine Corps (USMC), with the BLM participating as a cooperating agency. The Depart-

ment defers to USAF and USMC regarding the military interests and assets under their jurisdiction.

Background

The BMGR, located in southwestern Arizona, was first established to train U.S. pilots during World War II, and continues to serve as a military training range today. Spanning 1.7 million acres, the BMGR is comprised of one range jointly managed by USAF and USMC. The BMGR is the nation's fourth largest land-based military range, and the largest range at which tactical aviation training is the predominant mission. The existing land withdrawal and reservation for the BMGR provided by the Military Land Withdrawal Act of 1999 is due to expire on October 4, 2024.

H.R. 4377

H.R. 4377 provides for the extension of the military withdrawal of the BMGR until 2049, an expansion of the range through the withdrawal of the 2,366-acres of BLM-managed lands identified as the Gila Bend Addition for inclusion in the BMGR, among other provisions.

In addition to extending the withdrawal for the BMGR, the bill would expand the range by withdrawing approximately 2,366 acres of BLM-managed land, referred to as the Gila Bend Addition, and add it to the existing BMGR to enhance the safety and security of flight operations and allow USAF to control use and access of this area under restricted airspace. USAF and USMC jointly prepared a Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for the requested withdrawal extension and expansion. The BLM notes that the Gila Bend Addition is a remote area used sporadically for dispersed recreation and contains one active grazing allotment that has not been grazed since 1989. The BLM participated in and contributed to the development of the LEIS as a cooperating agency, and the Department supports this provision.

H.R. 4377 also addresses outdated and redundant land records and statuses, as recommended by the BLM and accepted by the lead agencies during the development of the LEIS for the withdrawal extension and expansion. This includes the revocation of outdated legacy World War II-era Public Land Orders and Executive Orders that withdrew and reserved land for the BMGR, but are redundant in light of the existing withdrawal. The bill also clarifies the withdrawal status of certain lands along the BMGR perimeter withdrawn by the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986. The Department supports these provisions, which provide important clarity regarding land status for all involved parties.

Additionally, H.R. 4377 directs the transfer of the 20.66-acre Legal Tender Mine from the Secretary of the Air Force to the Secretary of the Interior at no cost and in as-is condition for inclusion in the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. This transfer would ensure the continued protection of the mine's natural and cultural resources and advance the National Wildlife Refuge System's conservation mission. Further, the designation of this property as part of the Cabeza Prieta Wilderness would facilitate seamless management of the site with the surrounding refuge lands, 93% of which are Designated Wilderness.

Conclusion

The Department appreciates the importance of military ranges and the space needed for military training to secure our nation and support the multiple missions of our Armed Forces. We are proud to coordinate with the Department of Defense to facilitate responsible use of public lands to support military readiness, training, and testing. Throughout the country, the Department has established productive partnerships with the military to support these goals. The Department supports H.R. 4377 and looks forward to working with the Subcommittee and our military partners as this legislation progresses through Congress.

Submission for the Record by Rep. Westerman**Statement for the Record**

Lieutenant General Kevin M. Iiams
Commanding General, Training and Education Command

and

Major General David W. Maxwell,
Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations Command

on H.R. 4377

Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, and distinguished members of this subcommittee, we are thankful for the opportunity to present this statement regarding the continuing provision of withdrawal of the lands of the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR) for use by the Department of Defense (DOD).

The Marine Corps remains the Nation's force-in-readiness—a naval expeditionary force ready to deter adversaries, respond to crisis and conflict, and contribute to Naval and Joint Force operations. Our identity as Marines centers on being ready to deter, fight, and win. As individuals, as units, and as a Corps, everything we do is in support of warfighting advantage and being most ready when the Nation is least ready. This is our obligation to the American people.

A key element in providing ready forces is the availability of suitable and sustainable training areas, ranges, airspace, and sea space. Readiness requires a combination of people, assets, ranges, training, and experimentation to meet force development objectives in support of both current and future challenges. Our ongoing readiness to meet force design initiatives will require critical ranges and training areas be available for the Marine Corps to conduct live, virtual, and constructive training. One of the centerpieces for that advanced training capability for the Marine Corps is the BMGR in Southwest Arizona. The collective ranges and training areas in California and Arizona managed by Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma comprise over 1.1 million acres of land area, approximately 7,397 square nautical miles of airspace, making it the Marine Corps' largest training complex, and the BMGR West (BMGR-W) falls under its purview.

The Marine Corps portion of BMGR-W, comprised of approximately 693,619 acres and consisting of three subranges that support aviation training, including Tactical Aircrew Combat Training Systems (TACTS) High, TACTS Low, and Cactus West, which provide for Air to Air, simulated Air to Ground, scored Air to Ground, supersonic flight, Low Altitude Training and Tactics (LATT), Electronic Warfare, Laser Certified Ranges, Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP), Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARP), Assault Landing Zone (ALZ) training, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), Counter UAS and Aerial Delivery (AD) operations. Additionally, approximately 50 different types of aircraft (military and government agency) utilize the BMGR-W on an annual basis.

Significant portions of BMGR-W contain multiple live-fire training areas for individual and crew served weapons training, convoy operations training, Explosive Ordnance Disposal training, and limited new systems test, development, and experimentation. The BMGR also provides necessary ground maneuver area for ground combat elements operating in support of aviation training, to include the biannual Marine Corps Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course, which is supported by a ground element of more than 1,200 personnel for each course.

These courses are critical to Marine Corps aviation training and readiness, which require access to the BMGR—West and East. The biannual WTI courses facilitate the development of aviation tactics, techniques, and procedures through tactical experimentation in realistic combat training scenarios and produces over 300 military occupational specialty Weapons and Tactics Instructors annually. WTI qualified instructors return to their home unit and serve as squadron training officers who use their skills to act as aircraft and weapons subject matter experts to provide their units with the proper training and evaluation to ensure exceptional combat readiness. As such, loss of access to the BMGR would have profoundly negative effects on both Marine Corps aviation readiness and Force Design (FD) 2030 experimentation and implementation.

The BMGR also provides the venue for USMC readiness and pre-deployment training, for up to 20 deployable units per year. Additionally, many other MCAS Yuma tenants, including the Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron 1 (VMX-1), Marine Aircraft Group 13 (MAG-13), Marine Air Control Squadron 1

(MACS-1), Marine Fighter Training Squadron 401 (VMFT-401), Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 (VMU-1), and Combat Logistics Company 16 (CLC-16), utilize BMGR-W year-round to train and maintain operational readiness. The BMGR also provides critical support to the mission readiness of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (3d MAW) units located at MCAS Miramar and MCAS Camp Pendleton, as well as numerous Navy and Marine Corps units that deploy to the region for individual, unit level, and large-scale exercise training.

The BMGR functions as part of a system of ranges in conjunction with all Marine Corps Installations West's (MCIWEST's) installations, ranges, and training facilities, as well as multiple Navy Operating Areas and other DOD installations and airspace within the southwest of the United States. As an example, the Navy's Southwest Tactical Training Range and Tactical Combat Training System (TCTS) ranges includes MCAS Yuma's BMGR-W, in addition to other Navy and Marine Corps range complexes, providing critical training and readiness support to the Naval operating forces, aviation training commands, and other Service units. In addition to BMGR-W range areas, the eastern portion of the BMGR managed by the U.S. Air Force and Luke Air Force Base provides surface-to-air threat simulators and training systems that are integral to Marine Corps aviation training during WTI and for advanced systems training by Marine Corps and Navy F-35 aircrew.

The criticality of the BMGR-W for training use by the DOD is evident in the training usage numbers generated on an annual basis. On average, BMGR-W is utilized for training more than 317 days per year, supporting over 16,500 aviation flights (sorties) and 335 annual ground training events. Absent the BMGR-W, the aforementioned training would have to be absorbed by other training locations, a near impossibility due to cost, competing timelines, and capacity, all resulting in lost training and significant negative impact to combat readiness.

The Department of the Navy (DON) and the Marine Corps have made substantial investment in MCAS Yuma's ranges and training infrastructure resources, including range instrumentation, target systems, and simulation technologies within BMGR-W. Over the last ten years this investment has totaled approximately \$193.5M. Annually, the DON and Marine Corps invests over \$10M, plus extensive staff hours and labor costs, to ensure MCAS Yuma achieves an appropriate balance between realistic, effective training and training capability resources including extensive use of the BMGR-W complex. This investment centers around four cornerstone objectives; Sustain Range and Training System Capabilities, Maximize Training Capacity, Modernizing Ranges, and Preserving the Natural Environment and Mitigating Encroachment.

As government stewards of this range, the Marine Corps is responsible for managing all natural and cultural resources within the BMGR-W. Thus, the Marine Corps participates in local and regional partnerships and organizations such as the Barry M. Goldwater Executive Council (BEG), the Intergovernmental Executive Committee (IEG), and the Western Regional Partnership (WRP). The goal of these partnerships is to address issues of mutual concern with states and federal agencies, including enhancing access with the local and visiting communities for public recreation activities, as well as the quality of military test and training ranges. Additionally, in managing the resources of the BMGR, the Marine Corps also has close working relationships with many other key local, state, and federal partners including Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Land and Water Trust, Compatible Lands Foundation, Mojave Desert Land Trust, the Conservation Fund, and Yuma County, Arizona.

The range is home to numerous special status species which are endemic to the region, including the flat-tailed horned lizard (FTHL) and the endangered Sonoran pronghorn. The Marine Corps manages 114,800 acres of FTHL habitat as part of the Yuma Desert Management Area, which represents 88% of the protected habitat for this species remaining in Arizona. MCAS Yuma personnel are actively engaged in the management decisions regarding the species through representation on both the FTHL Management Oversight Group (MOG) and the Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC). Utilizing the collective expertise of the MOG and ICC, MCAS Yuma's management efforts across the FTHL's range within BMGR-W have contributed significantly to precluding federal listing of this species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), thus avoiding additional regulatory encroachment on military training while ensuring long-term sustainability for this species. Additionally, BMGR-W provides substantial habitat for the ESA listed Sonoran Pronghorn. In 2002, severe drought nearly caused eradication of the U.S. population, leaving just 21 animals remaining. After two decades of interagency collaboration the Sonoran Pronghorn population in the U.S. has rebounded to over 500 animals. Further, MCAS Yuma has developed an Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) and routinely consults with 13 Native American Tribes and the Arizona

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the protection of cultural resources and archeological sites. The installation conducts annual surveys to mitigate impacts to cultural sites. Thus far, approximately 625 sites onboard BMGR-W have been identified and are being protected.

Approximately 75 percent (nearly 500,000 acres) of the BMGR-W is open to regulated public use by the local and visiting community. Popular activities include camping, hunting, wildlife photography, hiking, and off-highway vehicle use on designated roads and trails. MCAS Yuma annually issues over 12,000 public recreation permits, which are required for range access. Providing recreational access that does not conflict with military training allows MCAS Yuma to generate support from the greater Yuma community for the Marine Corps and its mission. In addition, MCAS Yuma works collaboratively with other state and federal partners including Customs and Border Protect (CBP), AGFD, and Bureau of Reclamation to allow these agencies to pursue their mission objectives on military lands.

To meet the current and future mission requirements, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen must be able to “train as they fight” through a robust and sustainable training capability and supporting infrastructure. The BMGR is extremely critical to addressing these challenges to ensure Marine Corps and Air Force aviation and ground training and operational readiness meets required thresholds of today and in the years to come. The Marine Corps remains committed to protecting the natural and cultural resources onboard BMGR-W while achieving the readiness to enable the Marine Corps to prevail in any future conflict. With the renewal of the BMGR we look forward to a continuing, productive relationship in our use of public lands which balances the readiness of our nation’s combat forces and the protection of its natural resources.

Submissions for the Record by Rep. Neguse

Susan Combs
Austin, TX

July 11, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Natural Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing this important legislation for consideration.

Most recently, I served as the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget of the Department of the Interior. It was an honor to serve the American people and to be a leader in support of the Department of the Interior's essential mission to protect and manage the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. On behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, while Assistant Secretary I also served as the Chair of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission throughout the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 2020. In that role, I became increasingly aware of the stark disparities in the stories that we as a Nation uplift.

History is full of pioneering women, but that's not reflected in Washington or around the country. Of the 423 National Parks managed by the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, only 10 commemorate some aspect of American women's history. That's 2.3%. We can and must do better. But only Congress has the authority to decide which monuments are placed within the National Mall, and only Congress can give this foundational American history the prominent place it has so long been denied. The 'Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act' will uphold the integrity of the National Mall by finally including women's stories in the beating heart of the Nation's Capital.

Thank you again for your consideration of this historic project. I hope you will support H.R. 1318. Your leadership in placing the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall—the most visited National Park in the United States—will expand our Nation's understanding of American women's leadership in the founding and shaping of our Republic and make certain that women's contributions to American democracy continue to inspire for generations to come.

Sincerely,

SUSAN COMBS,
*Former Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget
of the Department of the Interior*

Kate Clarke Lemay

July 10, 2023

Dear Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands:

Have you ever been to a major exhibition devoted to U.S. women's history? ("Major" being more than 80 objects.) Some people have, but most people haven't. Upon reflection, most people will realize that U.S. history—as presented in public space—is a men's history. The notable exceptions were the major exhibitions about women's suffrage, on view in 2019 at the National Portrait Gallery, the Library of Congress and the National Archives. Women's history was, for the first time, *visibly* valued. Now, you might ask yourself: why did it take until 2019?

The news website *Slate* came out with an essay in 2016 asserting that 70% to 80% of historians are men. Unsurprisingly, men typically write about men's history. In fact, it was not until 2019, when the book *Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence* was published, that a comprehensive book accounted for the long history

of women's struggle for the right to vote. It was the first publication in sixty years to link U.S. suffrage history from a beginning point, 1832, to an end point, 1965. (Eleanor Flexner published the previous book to do so, *Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States*, in 1959).

So, where would people learn that *women* staged one of the longest social reform movements *in the history of the United States*? In 2019, visitors to Washington, DC, discovered for the first time that the history of women's suffrage is not a boring history of nagging spinsters; but that it is an exciting history of revolution staged by political geniuses. The men and women of the suffrage movement were the original rule breakers; they are the historical equivalent to the activists that we esteem and admire today for speaking out for their rights.

Indeed, the way educators in the United States frame women's history in general needs attention. In 2017, the National Women's History Museum revealed that of the 178 individual women named in state standards for education in middle and high school textbooks, four of them were non-U.S. women (like Margaret Thatcher) and two were not even real women (such as Rosie the Riveter).

How are women to be valued in American society when there is not even a monument to their history on the National Mall? Animating this undervalued history with the greatest impact is something that only a well-thought out, beautifully designed monument can do. This letter is meant to express my full support of building a monument to U.S. women's suffrage on the National Mall.

Sincerely,

KATE CLARKE LEMAY, PHD,
*Historian, National Portrait Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution*

Paula J. Giddings
Northampton, MA

July 11, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Natural Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing this important legislation for consideration.

As a scholar of Black women's history and the biographer of the anti-lynching activist and suffragist, Ida B. Wells, I can personally attest to the importance of representing women, including women of color, through our nation's national symbols. Just as the Statue of Liberty has inspired generations of Immigrants coming to our shores, a centrally placed monument signifying the great achievement of women's suffrage—won by courage, sacrifice, and a shared belief that all Americans are equal—will not only preserve an important historical memory, but will remind us of the sanctity of the vote. "With no sacredness of the ballot," wrote Ida B. Wells who worked for women's suffrage to not only exercise women's rights but to stop lynching and achieve Black equality, "there can be no sacredness of human life itself."

Thank you again for your consideration of this historic project. I hope you will support H.R. 1318. Your leadership in placing the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall—the most visited National Park in the United States—is so important to our shared understandings of the importance of women's rights—an understanding which in turn helps to bind us as a nation.

Sincerely,

PAULA J. GIDDINGS,
*Elizabeth A. Woodson 1922 Professor (Emerita)
Smith College*

Ashley Robertson Preston

July 10, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in bringing up this important legislation for consideration.

I am Dr. Ashley Robertson Preston, an Assistant Professor of History at Howard University and supporter of the monument. As someone who specializes in Black women's history, I feel that this is one of the most significant efforts of the century. We have an opportunity to teach future generations about courageous women who have been largely overlooked in the American narrative. These women deserve to be on the National Mall alongside other history makers to assure that they are never forgotten again.

Thank you again for your consideration of this historic project. I hope you will support H.R. 1318. Your leadership in placing the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall—the most visited National Park in the United States—will expand our Nation's understanding of American women's leadership in the founding and shaping of our Republic and make certain that women's contributions to American democracy continue to inspire for generations to come.

Sincerely,

ASHLEY ROBERTSON PRESTON, PH.D.,
Assistant Professor of History
at Howard University

The Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation
Fayetteville, New York

July 11, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Natural Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing this important legislation for consideration.

Suffragist Matilda Joslyn Gage in 1876 charged that the United States was not a Republic, based on the consent of the governed, it was an "oligarchy of sex" with women being ruled by their "brothers, their fathers, their husbands and even their sons." The enactment of an amendment ensuring votes for women has rightly been labeled the second American Revolution. The creation of a monument on the National Mall recognizing this critical moment is essential to establishing a legacy of historic accuracy celebrating the history of American's democracy.

Thank you again for your consideration of this historic project. I hope you will support H.R. 1318. Your leadership in placing the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall—the most visited National Park in the United States—will expand our Nation's understanding of American women's leadership in the founding and shaping of our Republic and make certain that women's contributions to American democracy continue to inspire for generations to come.

Sincerely,

SALLY ROESCH WAGNER, PH.D.,
Executive Director

Brad Meltzer

July 11, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Natural Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing this important legislation for consideration.

I have written dozens of books that share America's histories and uplift American heroes, and I have learned that too often, women's stories are undervalued, undertold, and considered footnotes and sidebars to the larger story. It is a mistake that we as a country cannot afford to continue to make. It is long past time that the great women of American history be permanently recognized for their contributions to America's democracy in our Nation's most important commemorative corridor, and with your leadership, I look forward to the day when I can stand with my daughter on the National Mall and proudly show her that her country values *who she is* and *who she will be*. I hope we can count on your support of H.R. 1318.

Sincerely,

BRAD MELTZER,
Author & Historian

Michelle Duster

July 11, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Natural Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing this important legislation for consideration.

Over the last 30 years, my work as an author and public historian has been dedicated to uplifting stories of courage and histories of resilience that capture important aspects of our country's complex history. And there is one simple notion I return to repeatedly in my work: the contributions to our democracy by the pioneering women of American history, like my great-grandmother, Ida B. Wells, are too often overlooked, undertaught, and underappreciated. This is why I am proud to support H.R. 1318. By locating the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall, we address important omissions and make visible the role of our foremothers in building, securing, and expanding our democracy and celebrate the great women leaders of American history who dedicated their lives to the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive union.

Thank you again for your consideration of this historic project. I urge your support of H.R. 1318. History is counting on you.

Sincerely,

MICHELLE DUSTER,
Author & Public Historian
Great-Granddaughter of Pioneering Journalist and Suffragist Ida B. Wells

**National Sculpture Society
New York, New York**

July 10, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Hearing scheduled on Thursday, July 13, 2023

Specifically: H.R. 1318, to authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the women's suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, and for other purposes.

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I am writing to ask for your support of the site location on the National Mall for a monument in recognition of the women's suffrage movement and the resulting passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. That momentous event in our nation's history should be commemorated on a prominent site in our nation's capital.

It astounds me to think that my grandmother and great-aunts were born in a country—this country—where women did not have a political voice. As you know, the women's suffrage movement began 176 years ago when a group of people gathered in Seneca Falls, New York. Over the next seven decades, the extraordinary efforts of a diverse group of (mostly) women from across the country, single and married, wealthy and poor, of all colors and backgrounds, led the effort to secure the right of women to vote. Many who devoted the good part of their lives to realizing this basic right did not live to know the results of their efforts. Just 102 years ago, Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

This proposed monument will be a tribute to the bold women and men that championed equality in this country, through imprisonment, hunger strikes, steadfast organizing and educating.

I respectfully request that we, as a nation, celebrate the great work and achievement of the women's suffrage movement with a monument on the National Mall. On the proposed site, countless citizens of our nation and visitors to our capital will see it and be reminded that all Americans play an important role in our society.

Sincerely yours,

GWEN PIER,
Executive Director

**Johns Hopkins University
Museum Studies Program**

June 15, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in bringing up this important legislation for consideration.

I have spent nearly thirty years leading museums in the United States, and the lack of representation of women artists and women's stories has been a constant challenge. Increasing the visibility of women's history—specifically women's fight for the vote and the pioneers of the early American movement for women's equality—

is crucial if we are going to change this narrative for generations to come. Great women in American history deserve to be shown on the National Mall alongside the great men, for both helped to shape who we are as a nation as well as our shared destiny to form a more perfect Union.

Thank you again for your consideration of this historic project. I hope you will support H.R. 1318. Your leadership in placing the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall—the most visited National Park in the United States—will expand our Nation's understanding of American women's leadership in the founding and shaping of our Republic and make certain that women's contributions to American democracy continue to inspire for generations to come.

Sincerely,

NIK APOSTOLIDES,
Lecturer

Senator Barbara Mikulski (Ret.)

July 11, 2023

House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

I understand the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Natural Lands will hold a hearing on H.R. 1318, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act, on Thursday, July 13. Thank you for your leadership in prioritizing this important legislation for consideration.

Without a monument to the great women of American history who paved the way for us to fully participate in and shape our democracy, the telling of the American story on our National Mall is not yet complete. It will be a proud day for our country when every girl who visits the National Mall is able to see herself represented amongst the giants of our national story and understand the role of her foremothers in building, securing, and expanding our democracy.

Your leadership in placing the Women's Suffrage National Monument on the National Mall—the most visited National Park in the United States—will expand our Nation's understanding of American women's leadership in the founding and shaping of our Republic and make certain that women's contributions to American democracy continue to inspire for generations to come.

As the longest serving woman in congressional history, I proudly stand on the shoulders of the suffragists who fought bravely and boldly for generations to secure women's political equality and urge your support of H.R. 1318.

Sincerely,

SENATOR BARBARA MIKULSKI (RET.)

