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THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3221

Written Testimony of the Honorable Elise Stefanik

House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1479, H.R. 1504, H.R. 8931,
H.R. 8946, H.R. 9159, H.R. 9492, H.R. 9516 & S. 612

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Tiffany and members of the Federal Lands Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit testimony on my bipartisan legislation, the *Strengthening America's Turning Point Act* for this legislative hearing today.

My bipartisan bill, H.R. 8931, would rename the Saratoga National Historical Park to the Saratoga National Battlefield Park. I am always proud to share with my colleagues in Congress and the American people that Upstate New York and the North Country are known as the cradle of the American Revolution, home to numerous battlefields and historic sites that were critical in shaping our nation's founding and history.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of American independence, it is an opportune time to ensure the rich military history in our region is honored and preserved for future generations. As Co-Chair of the Congressional Battlefield Caucus, one of my top priorities in Congress is to ensure the many battlefields and historic sites in Upstate New York, the North Country, and across the nation are preserved to protect these living classrooms for our communities and children to discover our nation's origin story on the very ground where history took place.

I am honored to have worked alongside local officials and stakeholders in our community to lead this bipartisan legislation. My *Strengthening America's Turning Point Act* would rename the Saratoga National Historical Park to the Saratoga National Battlefield Park, which will more accurately reflect the historical significance of the site and emphasize the crucial military engagements that took place there. The historic site was originally named the Saratoga Battlefield Park, but when it became a national park in 1938, the word 'battlefield' was left out of its name. This small but significant fix to return it to its original name, a change that is unanimously supported by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, will help honor the Battles of Saratoga that took place at the site and clearly identify the site as America's Turning Point in our war for independence.

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Changing the name to Saratoga National Battlefield Park will also increase public understanding of the deep significance the site holds in our military history and honor where so many gave their last full measure of devotion. This will increase the national recognition of the site's importance in our country's history. The Battles of Saratoga were the most significant turning point of the American Revolution. The American defeat of British forces at Saratoga marked a changing of the tide in the Revolutionary War, securing foreign support from France and bolstering domestic support for the American patriots and their righteous cause.

According to a recent National Park Service report, the park received about 102,000 visitors last year, generating approximately \$9 million dollars for the local economy and supporting 85 jobs in the area. Renaming our site the Saratoga National Battlefield Park will help clearly inform tourists in our region about the importance of the site, potentially fostering increased economic growth via heritage tourism in our communities.

With the 250th anniversary of our country's founding just around the corner, I'm honored to lead this legislation that acknowledges the significance of the turning point in the Revolutionary War and one of the most decisive American battles of the American Revolution. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the *Strengthening America's Turning Point Act* to distinguish this site that was crucial to the founding of our nation as a historic battlefield.

I thank Chairman Westerman and Chairman Tiffany for holding this important legislative hearing and I look forward to working with the Committee to continue to promote and preserve the rich history of Upstate New York and the North Country.

Thank you.