

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of my bill, H.R. 1945, America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark Act.

This bill would formally recognize America's National Churchill Museum in Fulton, Missouri, as a National Historic Landmark, a designation that is both long overdue and deeply deserved.

Nearly 80 years ago, in 1946, Westminster College in Fulton hosted one of the most consequential speeches of the 20th century: Winston Churchill's "Sinews of Peace," better known as the "Iron Curtain" speech. With President Harry Truman at his side, Churchill warned the world of the division descending over Europe. Many historians mark that moment as the beginning of the Cold War. But even more, it was a call to defend democracy, strengthen alliances, and uphold the principles of freedom.

To honor Churchill's words and legacy, Westminster College embarked on an extraordinary project. Rather than erecting a simple statue or plaque, the college acquired, transported, and painstakingly reconstructed a Christopher Wren-designed church from London, a building whose history stretches back over 900 years.

St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, survived the Great Fire of London in 1666, was rebuilt by Wren, and then was nearly destroyed again during the Blitz of World War II. Its walls stood in ruin for two decades in London before being shipped stone by stone across the Atlantic and rebuilt in Fulton as a memorial to Churchill's leadership and vision.

This building is more than an architectural marvel. It's a symbol of resilience, transatlantic partnership, and the enduring fight for freedom. Built by the British, bombed by the Germans, and rebuilt in the American Midwest, it is a powerful, living testament to our shared history and values.

Over the decades, the site has continued to shape history. Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev, Prime Minister Thatcher, and other world leaders have stood at Westminster College to deliver major addresses on peace, security, and democracy, using the very lectern Churchill used in 1946. The Museum also houses Churchill's own annotated draft of his Iron Curtain speech, rare artifacts, and even a sculpture crafted from sections of the Berlin Wall.

The museum was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 and formally renamed by Congress in 2009 as "America's National Churchill Museum." H.R. 1945 would elevate that recognition to the level of National Historic Landmark. This is more than a title, it is a commitment to preserve the site, support educational efforts, and honor the unique role this institution plays in telling our nation's, and the world's, history.

Importantly, the bill respects property rights, preserves local control, and authorizes cooperative agreements for preservation and education without imposing federal management or restrictions.

In a time when we continue to grapple with challenges to freedom and democracy around the world, there is no better moment to reinforce the lessons of Churchill's call to vigilance and cooperation.

I urge the Committee to support this bill and ensure that America's National Churchill Museum receives the recognition it so clearly merits as a National Historic Landmark.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*(Above Remarks = 526 words)*