

TESTIMONY OF JOHN ONDRASIK IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2701, THE “*FALLEN SERVICEMEMBERS RELIGIOUS HERITAGE RESTORATION ACT*” BEFORE THE DISABILITY ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

JUNE 24, 2025

Chairman Luttrell and Ranking Member McGarvey, as a singer-songwriter who has spent my life telling stories—of courage, sacrifice, and the human spirit—I believe in honoring those who gave everything for this country with truth and dignity. That’s why I fully support H.R. 2701, the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act.

This bill addresses a painful historical mistake: the burial of hundreds of Jewish American soldiers under Latin crosses instead of the Star of David in U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These were Jewish heroes who died fighting for freedom, and they deserve to be remembered as who they truly were—in life and in death.

I’ve long been an advocate for Jewish visibility, truth, and justice—values I see reflected in the incredible work of Operation Benjamin, which has quietly and respectfully restored Jewish headstones for these fallen warriors. But this should not be the work of volunteers alone. It is time for the U.S. government to step in and ensure these men are honored with the full recognition they’ve earned.

In an era where antisemitism is once again on the rise, this legislation is more than a correction—it’s a statement. It says that Jewish identity is not to be hidden or ignored,

but acknowledged, respected, and remembered. We can't change the past, but we can choose how we remember it.

I urge Congress to pass H.R. 2701 and ensure that every fallen soldier receives the honor they deserve—not just for the country they served, but for the identity they carried.

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