

# **Personal Statement of Sarah Stern in Support of H.R. 2701, the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act**

**June 24, 2025**

Chairman Luttrell and Ranking Member McGarvey, as the founder and president of the Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET), I have spent nearly two decades working to educate lawmakers and advocate for policies rooted in truth, justice, and security—especially when it comes to the U.S.-Israel alliance. It is from that same foundation of values that I offer my strong support for H.R. 2701, the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act.

This bill seeks to correct a heartbreaking historical wrong: the mistaken burial of Jewish American service members under Latin crosses in U.S. military cemeteries overseas, rather than the Star of David—the symbol of their faith and identity. These brave soldiers fought and died as Americans and as Jews. They deserve to be remembered as both.

My husband, Buddy, recently attended an Operation Benjamin headstone rededication at Arlington National Cemetery. He came home deeply moved by the solemnity, the dignity, and the moral clarity of the ceremony. It was a powerful testament to the importance of honoring these servicemen in accordance with their true heritage.

Operation Benjamin has done noble and painstaking work to identify and correct these historical errors. But this mission should not rest solely on the shoulders of a nonprofit. It is our government's responsibility to ensure that every American who made the ultimate sacrifice is honored faithfully and accurately. H.R. 2701 would give the American Battle Monuments Commission the means to do just that.

At a time when antisemitism is again rearing its head—across our institutions, in our streets, and even in our schools—this bill is more than a correction of the past. It is a statement of principle: that Jewish Americans are integral to the American story, and that their identity and sacrifice will not be erased.

I urge Congress to pass this vital legislation without delay.

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Sarah Stern  
Founder and President, Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)  
Silver Spring, MD  
[sstern@emetonline.org](mailto:sstern@emetonline.org)