

Rep. Wasserman Schultz | HVAC-DAMA Remarks
June 24, 2025 | 3 minutes

Thank you to Chairman Luttrell and Ranking Member McGarvey for adding my bill, H.R. 2701, the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act, to the agenda for today's legislative hearing and for allowing me to speak on it.

And thank you to Congressman Max Miller for joining me as the Republican co-lead and to Senate Veterans Affairs Chairman Moran and Senator Rosen for leading this effort in the Senate.

The Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act is a straightforward, bipartisan bill that ensures the United States properly honors the religion and heritage of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

It creates a program within the American Battle Monuments Commission to identify American-Jewish servicemembers buried in U.S. military cemeteries in ABMC purview under headstones that incorrectly represent their religion and heritage.

World War II was brutal and devastating, leading to challenges of ensuring every fallen American servicemember received the honor and respect of a proper burial.

From World War II alone, it's estimated that 600 American-Jewish servicemembers killed in action remain improperly buried under Latin Crosses rather than Stars of David.

While some of these improper burials were due to clerical errors, we have heard many stories of Jewish war heroes not wanting to display their faith on their dog tags while fighting against the antisemitic and genocidal Nazi regime.

But this issue is not limited to World War II. This spring, I had the honor of participating in a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to properly honor two World War I fallen American Jewish servicemembers, Private David Moser and Private First Class Adolph Hanf.

Both were laid to rest for over 100 years under a headstone etched with a Latin Cross. In a moving ceremony sponsored by Private Moser's niece, the headstones of these American heroes were replaced, properly honoring their heritage after all these years.

At a moment when antisemitism is at record highs, this moment of healing was incredibly special.

I've been honored by the wide-ranging organizational support for the bill. That list includes the American Legion, Jewish Federations of North America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Gold Star Spouses of America, Jewish War Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The Non-Commissioned Officers Association, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, or TAPS, are also in support of this bill.

As the Ranking Member of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, which provides funding for the ABMC, I am acutely aware that the programs Congress authorizes require funding to ensure proper implementation.

In the FY26 MILCON/VA Appropriations bill on the floor this week, I secured \$500,000 to carry out this mission within AMBC and will fight to ensure it stays in the bill as we continue the FY26 appropriations process.

Thank you again for including H.R. 2701 in today's hearing.