

July 27, 2022

**National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission Statement for the Record**  
Senator Chris Coons

Thank you, Chairman May, for your time and consideration of S. 3579, a bill to authorize the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C., to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to honor the extraordinary contributions of Jean Monnet to restoring peace between European nations and establishing the European Union, and for other purposes.

This legislation will commemorate the work of Jean Monnet in helping to foster peace in Europe and build diplomatic bonds between the United States and Europe during and after World War II.

From a young age, Monnet saw collaboration across Europe as a central pillar for ensuring peace on the continent. During World War I, Monnet facilitated the foundation of the Allied Maritime Transport Council, a partnership between France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States to manage maritime supplies and transportation. His success bringing together Allied nations during World War I led to his appointment to Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations in 1919.

During World War II, Jean Monnet played a central role in fostering strong ties between the Allies and the United States. At the request of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Monnet moved to Washington, D.C. and negotiated a massive and rapid transfer of American aircrafts and weapons to the Allied Forces. In recognition of this work, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Monnet to be one of his advisors for the war effort. Believing America could be “the great arsenal of democracy,” Monnet helped develop a domestic arms production program, one that stimulated the U.S. economy and buoyed the Allies’ efforts. Years later, English economist John Maynard Keynes estimated the efforts of Jean Monnet shortened the war by one year.

Following the war, Jean Monnet worked to achieve the United States’ goal of supporting European reconstruction and community-building. Monnet helped restore peace throughout the continent and provide aid to Europe through his work on the United States’ Marshall Plan. In France, he established the “Monnet Plan,” an ambitious initiative designed to reinvigorate the country and improve the standard of living by fostering national production and foreign trade.

Beyond these many accomplishments, Jean Monnet’s greatest legacy is unquestionably his role in founding the European Union. Driven by the Monnet Plan, France sought to pool European markets to prevent further conflict on the continent. In 1950, Jean Monnet co-authored the Schuman Declaration—a proposal to unify the production of French and West German Steel under a single authority. Ratified under the Treaty of Paris, the European Coal and Steel

Community (ECSC) represented the first integrated, supranational European body and the predecessor to the European Union. Fittingly, Monnet served as the first president of ECSC and ensured the United States was one of the Community's first partners. For his work in the foundation of a modern, unified Europe, Jean Monnet was the first person designated as an Honorary Citizen of Europe.

These efforts only begin to describe the wide range of accomplishments Jean Monnet achieved in his lifetime. In addition to his diplomatic work in the United States and Europe, Jean Monnet was well versed in international financing, using his expertise to aid Central and Eastern Europe's economic recovery after World War I.

Throughout his life, Jean Monnet developed a deep love for the United States and Washington, D.C. Monnet spent much of his life within the United States and played an indispensable role in developing diplomatic relationships essential to domestic security and prosperity. President John F. Kennedy described Monnet in a 1963 letter as "the exemplar of disinterested service to Europe and the Atlantic World," and went on to say that under his inspiration, "Europe has moved closer to unity in less than twenty years than it had done before in a thousand." In his later years, Monnet cited the United States and his time in Washington, D.C. as part of his inspiration for a unified Europe. Without a doubt, some of Monnet's grandest ideals of a peaceful Europe arose during the countless hours he spent in Rock Creek Park, a location he often referred to affectionately as "my park."

As a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the Chair of the Senate Appropriations State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee, I appreciate Jean Monnet's critical work facilitating international cooperation and advocating for international aid. Jean Monnet is a shining example of the strength that we wield when the United States stands with its allies. This truth is particularly salient now as the Western world stands in unison against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The groundwork that Monnet laid has provided us with a safer, more just world. He is truly a man worthy of commemoration.

Jean Monnet was a diplomat, businessman, and friend of the United States. It is without question that honoring the "Father of the European Union's" work is of the utmost national significance and historical importance. The work commissioned by the French Embassy embodies the spirit of a visionary figure in American and European history and will serve as a reminder of the lasting bond between the United States and its ally, a unified Europe.

Sincerely,



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Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator