

Rep. Wild Testimony – National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission

March 21, 2022

- I thank the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission for the opportunity to testify today in support of my bipartisan legislation, the *National Service Animals Memorial Act*, H.R. 6353.
- I'm proud to join Representative Mace of South Carolina and Senators Blumenthal of Connecticut and Blackburn of Tennessee in this effort to highlight the diverse and vital work of service animals and their handlers throughout our country's history.
- Our legislation authorizes the creation of a memorial on federal land in the District of Columbia, in accordance with the Commemorative Works Act.
- And I want to clarify our legislation does not use taxpayer dollars, but rather looks to the National Service Animals Monument Corporation to raise private dollars to create this commemorative work.

- As a lifelong animal lover and dog owner, I know firsthand the power of the human-animal bond and the value that animals can bring to our lives.
- For specially trained service animals, this connection can become all the more powerful, utilizing the special skills of many animal species and supporting humans' safety and wellbeing.
- Service animals' and their handlers' contributions have a great range, including supporting the independence and safety people with disabilities, serving as search and rescue support, and supporting specialized law enforcement and military operations.
- As we continue to strengthen the human-service animal bond and training, service animals' expertise can continue to become more advanced.
- For example, service dogs can be trained specifically to support people with a traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder – a key need for veterans and others.

- Service animals can support independent living by guiding people with visual impairments, retrieving items for people with mobility issues, and alerting for medical help for someone experiencing seizures or other emergencies.
- I'm proud to sponsor this legislation that will commemorate the many contributions of service animals and their handlers to our country and provide a venue to educate and engage the American public on this very worthy cause.
- I thank the Commission for its due consideration and yield back.