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United States Senate

October 17, 2022

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Ms. Beth Porter
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Ms. Sophia Kelly
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Ms. Porter and Ms. Kelly,

I write in support of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation's (GWOTMF) efforts to thoughtfully and expediently identify a site location on the National Mall for the Global War on Terrorism Memorial. As you know, last year Congress passed the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act, which specifically authorized a site in the Reserve area of the National Mall as the Memorial's future home. I was proud to lead this effort in the Senate, which marked a historic step toward honoring all who have served and sacrificed in the Global War on Terrorism.

I am glad that you will soon be meeting with GWOTMF representatives to discuss potential sites for the Memorial. I understand that site selection is a complicated process with many considerations at play, and therefore requires a collaborative, constructive dialogue to determine the best possible location. The foundation has been thorough and professional in their site analysis, and I appreciate you receiving them with a spirit of cooperation that reflects the honor and solemnity this project deserves.

In addition to the importance of the Memorial's ultimate location, it is also imperative that it be built as quickly as is practical. For many Americans, the wounds of war – literal and otherwise – are still fresh. Many Gold Star families, veterans, and others who supported America's post-9/11 counterterrorism efforts need a national place of healing, empowerment, and unity. All Americans deserve a place to honor those who have served our country in different capacities. The Memorial will also help educate a generation of Americans too young to remember the 9/11 attacks and subsequent valorous efforts to keep our country safe.

Perhaps most importantly, the Memorial must be built while the generation of warfighters who gave so much in places like Afghanistan and Iraq are still alive. Our veterans and others should not be forced to repeat the experience of our World War II veterans, who waited nearly 59 years from the end of World War II to see the inauguration of a Memorial in 2004.

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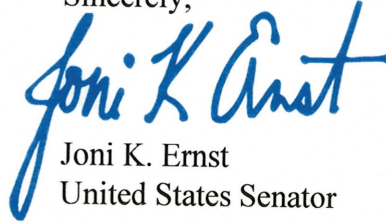
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Thank you for your very good work to commemorate a key chapter in American history, and to honor all who helped write it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joni K. Ernst". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "E".

Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator