

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL CAPITAL MEMORIAL
ADVISORY COMMISSION

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MONDAY
MAY 12, 2025

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The National Capital Memorial
Advisory Commission met via Videoconference, at
1:00 p.m. EDT, Tammy Stidham, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT

TAMMY STIDHAM, Chair, representing the Director
of the National Park Service
SARAH BATCHELER, representing the Chairman of the
Commission of Fine Arts
JOSEPH IMAMURA, representing the Architect of the
Capitol
EDWIN FOUNTAIN, representing the Chairman of the
American Battle Monuments Commission
CHRISTOPHER KOEPPPEL, representing the Advisory
Council on Historic Preservation (non-voting
member)
DAVID MALONEY, representing the Mayor of the
District of Columbia
DIANE SULLIVAN, representing the Chairman of the
National Capital Planning Commission
KRISTI TUNSTALL WILLIAMS, representing the
Administrator of the General Services
Administration

ALSO PRESENT

MATTHEW MCGRAW, Secretary

DANIEL FOX, Commission of Fine Arts

LAUREL HAMMIG, Memorial Program Manager, NCMAC

CARLTON HART, Commission of Fine Arts

CONTENTS

H.R.1102 - Commission to Study the Potential of a National Museum of Italian American History and Culture Act	7
H.R.186 - Hershel "Woody" Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act/S.858 - Hershel "Woody" Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act	18
H.R.1330 - Smithsonian National Museum of the American-Latino Act and H.R.1329 - Smithsonian American Women's History Museum Act.	29
H.R.2121 - Commission to Study the Creation of a National Museum of Irish American History	36
H.R.2306 - To reauthorize the Adams Memorial Commission, and for other purposes. . . .	45
S.1088 - A bill to provide that the memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and service of the women who worked on the home front to support the efforts of the United States military during World War II may be located in the National Mall, and for other purposes/H.R.2290 - To provide that the memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and service of the women who worked on the home front to support the efforts of the United States military during World War II may be located on the National Mall, and for other purposes	64
Women's Suffrage National Monument Site Selection	89
H.R.2196 - To provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.	151

S.1353 - A bill to extend the authority for
modifications to the Second Division
Memorial in the District of Columbia. . . 159

H.R.2377 - To authorize the White House Task
Force on Celebrating America's 250th
Birthday to establish the National
Garden of American Heroes, and for other
purposes. 165

Adjourn

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (1:04 p.m.)

3 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. I think we're
4 in a good spot. Good afternoon, everyone.
5 Welcome to the -- I believe it's our first
6 meeting of 2025 for the National Capital
7 Memorials Advisory Commission.

8 My name is Tammy Stidham and I serve
9 as the National Capital Memorial Advisory
10 Commission Chairman representing the Director of
11 the National Park Service.

12 Present for today's meeting are Diane
13 Sullivan representing the Chairman of the
14 National Capital Planning Commission.

15 Welcome, Diane, to your first
16 meeting.

17 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Thank you.

18 CHAIR STIDHAM: Also, Joseph Imamura
19 representing the Architect of the Capital, Sarah
20 Batcheler for the Chairman of the Commission of
21 Fine Arts, David Maloney representing the Mayor
22 of the District of Columbia, Kristi Tunstall

1 Williams representing the Administrator of the
2 General Services Administration -- hopefully,
3 Paul McMahon, representing the Secretary of
4 Defense, will be joining us shortly -- and Edwin
5 Fountain representing the Chairman of the
6 American Battle Monuments Commission.

7 Also representing the Advisory
8 Council on the Historic Preservation is
9 Christopher Koepfel.

10 Mr. Koepfel participates with the
11 Commission in a nonvoting advisory capacity and
12 this is his first meeting. And I hope I did not
13 trash your last name too badly.

14 COMMISSIONER KOEPEL: Thank you.
15 It's actually Koepfel.

16 CHAIR STIDHAM: Koepfel. Thank you.
17 Welcome.

18 COMMISSIONER KOEPEL: Thank you.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: I would be remiss if I
20 didn't thank Dan Fox and the Commission of Fine
21 Arts for their technical support at today's
22 meeting, which we could not have done without his

1 help. So, with that, we have a lot to do. So,
2 let's get started.

3 As most know who are joined here
4 today, this commission was established by the
5 Commemorative Works Act of 1986 and it is
6 required, by that act, to advise the Secretary of
7 the Interior, the Administrator of the General
8 Services Administration, and committees of
9 Congress, on the establishment of commemorative
10 works in the District of Columbia and to provide
11 its views to the appropriate committees of
12 Congress when the committees are considering
13 legislation to authorize commemorative works
14 within the District of Columbia.

15 This act also requires the sponsors
16 of unauthorized memorials to consult with this
17 commission regarding site line concept proposal.

18 Today, on our agenda, we have a large
19 number of pieces of legislation and a site
20 selection presentation by the Women's Suffrage
21 National Monument.

22 So, with that, we will start with the

1 first item, which is H.R.1102, a bill to
2 establish the Commission to study the potential
3 creation of a National Museum of Italian American
4 History and Culture.

5 On January 3rd, 2025, Representative
6 Thomas Suozzi of New York introduced H.R.1102,
7 which was referred to the Committee on Natural
8 Resources and in addition to the Committee on
9 House Administration.

10 The bill's sponsor was not able to
11 join us today, but sent his testimony over in
12 writing, which you guys should have received
13 earlier today not too early before this meeting
14 started as we just got it very late today.

15 We don't have any other planned
16 testimonies. So, I will poll our participants
17 and see if anyone has joined who wishes to speak
18 on behalf of the legislation before we dig into
19 discussion.

20 Okay. I am not seeing anyone. So,
21 with that, let's jump into it and I'll bring up
22 the legislation and we can start the discussions.

1 It's 1102, which I'm not seeing. I'm
2 sorry, guys.

3 Okay. Sorry. So, again, this is
4 1102 and it's a bill to establish the Commission
5 to study potential creation of a National Museum
6 of Italian American History and Culture, and for
7 other purposes.

8 The Act cites that, in general, to
9 establish the Commission, some qualifications of
10 that commission.

11 A little bit of background. I
12 already referenced the introduction by
13 Representative Suozzi and that it was referred to
14 Natural Resources Committee.

15 The bill currently has 41 co-sponsors
16 and no companion bill has been introduced into
17 the Senate and no hearing has been scheduled.

18 In this piece of legislation, it
19 directs the Commission to submit a report to the
20 President and Congress on possible locations for
21 the museum in D.C. and in its environs, and it
22 should be considered in consultation with NCMAC

1 and the Commission of Fine Arts, the Department
2 of the Interior and the Smithsonian.

3 And the Commission is required to
4 develop recommendations for a legislative plan of
5 action to create and construct the museum.

6 So, with that, I'll open it up for
7 discussion. Commissioner Fountain.

8 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: I don't know
9 if I'm happy to start, but I will start.

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: You know, I'd
12 say I'm not opposed to the idea of a commission
13 to -- I'm not opposed to the idea of such a
14 museum in general.

15 I do hesitate at the presumption that
16 it will be located in the District of Columbia
17 because, to be blunt, we're starting to slice the
18 apple pretty thin when we get into specific
19 nationalities.

20 We've got the -- we already have the
21 African American and Native American museums. We
22 have, in the pipeline, Latino American and

1 women's history museums.

2 Those each address fairly broad
3 swaths of the American population certainly in
4 our history.

5 When you start paring it down further
6 and focusing on specific nationalities, then it's
7 quite predictable that other nationalities are
8 going to want their museums as well.

9 You're going to have the German
10 Americans, the Scandinavians if not, you know,
11 more targeted than just Scandinavian.

12 I think we've already seen or heard
13 of a proposal for an Asian American that can be
14 sliced very, you know, much more finely than that
15 and then, all of a sudden, you're talking a dozen
16 or more, you know, museums in Washington.

17 And I think that's not an appropriate
18 direction to go for the District of Columbia for
19 a variety of reasons, space being one, and I
20 personally am not sure that's how we want to be
21 telling the American story.

22 I think it would be highly

1 appropriate to have museums like this other
2 places in the country where there may be a
3 significant nexus of people of that heritage.

4 So, I certainly don't oppose the
5 Commission to study the idea of a museum, but I
6 would be resistant at specifying that it be
7 placed in Washington.

8 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
9 Commissioner.

10 Commissioner Imamura, you look like
11 you're about to say something.

12 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: No, but thanks.
13 I'll defer to my peers at CFA and the District of
14 Columbia first.

15 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you, sir. I did
16 not see the hands.

17 Commissioner Batcheler.

18 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yes, I agree
19 with Commissioner Fountain's caution about the
20 road that this could lead us down pretty quickly,
21 I would think, but I did want to ask whether this
22 would be something that would necessarily be a

1 purpose-built museum.

2 I mean, there are buildings in the
3 District that could potentially be reused that
4 are maybe more embedded in the fabric of the city
5 that might speak to the, you know, the multiple
6 backgrounds that people come from within the city
7 if it's more embedded in the city fabric as part
8 of the building.

9 I don't know if what -- I mean, it
10 seems like what happens is -- the natural
11 progression is it gets authorized, they do a site
12 selection, they pick a site on the Mall.

13 It then gets, you know, it's a
14 purpose-built museum on the Mall before we know
15 what we're doing.

16 But, in this case, like Commissioner
17 Fountain, I'm not opposed to the idea, but would
18 suggest a different approach for this type of
19 museum.

20 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.

21 Commissioner Maloney.

22 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Thank you and

1 good morning everyone.

2 I would agree with the comments that
3 have been expressed and to the idea that the
4 museum not necessarily be purpose-built.

5 The District is trying to revitalize
6 its downtown. There are already a few
7 institutions that reflect various aspects of
8 history that locate in reused buildings downtown
9 and there is a large supply of office buildings
10 in town that could use some revitalization. And
11 so, I would agree that it shouldn't be required
12 to locate in the District.

13 And the idea that it could also help
14 the vitality of the city by locating not on the
15 Mall, but in other parts of the city, would be
16 helpful. Thanks.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.

18 Commissioner Sullivan.

19 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yes, thank
20 you.

21 I just want to agree with all the
22 fellow commissioners here and add one other

1 perspective from NCPC as just to underscore how
2 much change is happening in the District of
3 Columbia right now with the potential disposition
4 of federal buildings and to put that out there as
5 a huge opportunity especially in the area south
6 of the Mall.

7 Very close to the National Mall right
8 across the street we're going to be seeing a lot
9 of change there and it could be a great
10 opportunity, and I'll probably be saying that
11 throughout our meeting today. Thanks.

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

13 Commissioner Fountain.

14 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah. I just
15 wanted to -- I remembered, just to note for the
16 record, that there is, in fact, already an
17 institution styled as the Italian American Museum
18 of Washington, D.C., which is located on 3rd
19 Street, N.W.

20 And it may not be the scale that the
21 sponsor of this legislation contemplates, but the
22 discussion of existing buildings already in

1 Washington reminded me of that particular
2 building which already does commemorate Italian
3 American culture.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you for that. I
5 was not aware.

6 Commissioner Imamura.

7 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you,
8 Madam Chair.

9 I just want to echo the comments by
10 my peers and underscore Commissioner Sullivan's
11 comments about the potential disposition of the
12 federal buildings south of the Mall might be an
13 opportune moment there for consideration.

14 But otherwise, again, not opposed to
15 the study of it, but perhaps somewhere else if
16 possible.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: Commissioner Tunstall
18 Williams.

19 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: Yes.
20 I was just going to align myself with the
21 comments of the other commissioners and mention
22 what Commissioner Sullivan did that GSA is

1 currently in the process of evaluating
2 disposition of many assets not just south of the
3 Mall, but across the District, which would maybe
4 lend themselves to this effort.

5 And so, I encourage the organizers to
6 sort of be attuned to what's going on and kind of
7 watching for assets as they become available,
8 because they will be coming at a fairly steady
9 clip, at least from what I'm seeing inside the
10 government.

11 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. So, unless
12 there are other comments, I'll sort of rephrase
13 what I heard just to make sure we've gotten it
14 right.

15 No one is opposed to the study of the
16 museum, but there is question whether Washington,
17 D.C., is the place where this should happen.

18 There may be a nexus somewhere else
19 with this community that is a more appropriate
20 location.

21 As we continue to consider the
22 District for either memorials and museums, there

1 is a concern about space and the ability to house
2 the new museums and memorials to that extent.

3 And that, really, that thinking about
4 underutilized properties that are vacant and may
5 be more appropriate could be part of what they
6 study, and to point out the location of an
7 existing commemoration to this nationality on 3rd
8 Street, N.W.

9 Does that sound about right?

10 Great.

11 Okay. With that, we will write up
12 our letter back to the representative and we'll
13 share that draft with you so that you can review
14 and sign off on it before that goes.

15 All right. Moving right along we
16 have -- let me make sure I get it right. We are
17 moving on to the second agenda item, which is the
18 Adams Memorial Commission.

19 This is H.R.2306, which reauthorizes
20 the Adams Memorial Commission and allows for the
21 memorial to be placed within a location
22 identified by the Adams Memorial Commission on

1 the northeast side of the Ellipse within the
2 Reserve.

3 On March 24th, 2025, Representative
4 John Moolenaar introduced H.R.2306, which was
5 referred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

6 I do not believe Representative
7 Moolenaar is joining us.

8 Michael, that's correct, yes?

9 MR. MCGRAW: He is trying to try and
10 join us today, but not until around 1:45. He's
11 going to try and join. So, I'm watching for him.

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. So, then why
13 don't we jump over to the third item to see if
14 he's able to join, which is H.R.186, Hershel
15 "Woody" Williams National Medal of Honor Monument
16 Location Act, which also includes a companion
17 bill in the Senate, Hershel "Woody" Williams
18 National Medal of Honor Monument Location. They
19 both have the same name, just one is the House
20 and one is the Senate.

21 These were reintroduced from the
22 previous Congress to authorize the National Medal

1 of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a
2 commemorative work on the National Mall to honor
3 the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless
4 service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of
5 Honor recipients.

6 The Senate Bill 858 was introduced by
7 Senator James Justice of West Virginia on March
8 5th, 2025. It was referred to the Senate
9 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

10 And I failed to mention that H.R.2717
11 was introduced by Representative Blake Moore on
12 January 3rd. The bill was passed by the House.
13 So, the Senate bill is still up for
14 consideration.

15 I think that is -- I think that's it
16 for the analysis on that one.

17 So, to help spur conversation, the
18 last time this was introduced in the previous
19 Congress, there was a hearing.

20 And, at that point, the Department of
21 Interior's position was that it not be -- that it
22 respect the Commemorative Works Act and not be

1 within the Reserve for all of the reasons why I
2 think all of you know.

3 This version has not changed, but
4 there has not been a hearing set.

5 We have one speaker, I think. Cory
6 Crowley is here.

7 Mr. Fox, if you could promote him, I
8 believe he wanted to speak on behalf of this
9 piece of legislation.

10 MR. CROWLEY: Good afternoon.

11 Can you hear me?

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: We can. If you would
13 introduce yourself, that would be great.

14 MR. CROWLEY: Yeah. Cory Crowley with
15 the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation.
16 We're the entity looking to build the monument
17 for the National Medal of Honor in D.C.

18 I testified to this committee a year
19 ago and, as was noted by Tammy, we didn't make it
20 through last Congress through the Senate, but the
21 bill was reintroduced in the House and passed
22 unanimously earlier this year and it's now

1 pending before the Senate again.

2 I don't have anything particular to
3 say unless you have any questions you'd like to
4 ask me, but I think our position remains the same
5 that we believe this medal represents every
6 branch of the military, every conflict since the
7 Civil War when Abraham Lincoln created it.

8 And the monument we envision is small
9 and deferential, but we believe it's a direct
10 extension of Abraham Lincoln's legacy as the
11 President who created the Medal of Honor, which
12 is why we've crafted the language as we have.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: Sorry, I was having
14 trouble coming off of mute.

15 Are there any questions for Mr.
16 Crowley from any of the commissioners?

17 Okay. Thank you, Mr. Crowley, for
18 joining us.

19 MR. CROWLEY: Thank you all. We
20 appreciate you. And I believe Senator Justice
21 sent a statement for the record. If not, he
22 will, but, yeah, thank you.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. Thank you
2 very much.

3 And with that, Mr. Fox, you can
4 excuse our guest. I'm just asking if there are
5 any other attendees who are interested in
6 speaking on behalf of this piece of legislation,
7 I should clarify.

8 Okay. With that, any discussion?
9 Commissioner Batcheler.

10 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: We always are
11 faced with a question of where is the line,
12 right, where is the line of who gets admitted to
13 the Reserve, who gets admitted to Area 1, and
14 it's difficult to determine that line.

15 It actually seems to be somewhat
16 fluent depending on circumstances, but it was
17 established for a reason that the Reserve be the
18 Reserve with no new memorials in it.

19 And I fear that if we -- I mean, this
20 is not the only piece of legislation before us
21 today where we are being requested to consider a
22 site in the Reserve.

1 And, I mean, the -- if the Senate
2 bill passes, then it directs the memorial to be
3 in the Reserve, at least from what I understood
4 from what you were saying.

5 So, I'm not sure what our weighing in
6 on that would be -- what use that would be, but
7 it does not seem like something that has a narrow
8 focus like this.

9 Even though it is a medal that is
10 awarded to members of all the services, it still
11 feels like a fairly narrow-focused memorial.

12 And the Reserve, if, for anything,
13 seems to me that it should be reserved for
14 memorials with broader impact than this one.

15 So, I would not support this being in
16 the Reserve, but, again, I don't think that -- if
17 Congress decides that it's going to be there, I'm
18 not sure how we weigh in on that.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: So, to that point, it
20 doesn't become law until it has passed both the
21 House and the Senate.

22 So, I think it's important that we

1 give, you know, we're advisory to Congress -- to
2 the members of Congress to help them understand.

3 And I think sometimes it's
4 challenging for members when they get these
5 requests and not thinking about the totality of
6 the space that the Reserve represents in terms of
7 what is there now, what is the potential of what
8 could come and the other uses of the Mall.

9 I mean, this is America's front yard
10 and it is there for many things in addition to
11 commemoration, but also, you know, for the space
12 to be part of protests, for the space to be part
13 of the inauguration and, you know, it's assembly
14 space, it's recreational space.

15 And as that space continues to
16 dwindle, the important pieces start to fall away
17 and then what is left of America's front yard?

18 So, I think helping them to
19 understand this important fact that the law is in
20 place for a reason and that these reasons still
21 exist today is really important. So, that's sort
22 of where we are coming from.

1 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: I'll just add
2 a little bit to what I said, which is that the
3 scale of the Mall compared to the scale of
4 streetscape or smaller parks is vast.

5 And if this applicant or this group,
6 foundation, whatever they are, is interested in a
7 small memorial, it also may not be appropriate on
8 the Mall. It could be sort of eaten by the Mall.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you for that.

10 Other discussion? Commissioner
11 Fountain.

12 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah.
13 Obviously, my agency has a strong connection to
14 the, you know, the values and the service
15 represented by the Medal of Honor.

16 One of our present commissioners is,
17 himself, a Medal of Honor recipient and, at our
18 cemeteries, the headstones of soldiers who were
19 awarded the Medal of Honor have that recognized
20 on their headstone, and the engravings on those
21 headstones are gilt on a permanent basis to
22 reflect that honor. So, it's something we take

1 seriously.

2 That said, I do agree with what
3 Commissioner Batcheler had to say. It is narrow
4 and I think it's narrow in comparison to other
5 things that are on the Mall.

6 As I think I said the last time we
7 took this up, you know, while the achievements of
8 Medal of Honor recipients are extraordinary, the
9 values and the character of the service that they
10 represent are not unique to Medal of Honor
11 recipients.

12 They are shared by, you know, many of
13 our service members who are themselves already
14 represented in those monuments and memorials to
15 other conflicts that are on the Mall.

16 And so, I'm reluctant to carve out
17 that one group of service members for a place on
18 the Mall or within the Reserve as opposed to, as
19 Commissioner Batcheler suggested, a place
20 elsewhere in the city.

21 And I appreciate the linkage to
22 President Lincoln, but, at the end of the day,

1 it, again, is a very narrow part of President
2 Lincoln's legacy.

3 And if it's desirable to establish
4 that linkage, I would prefer to see that done in
5 the new visitor space being built in the lower
6 levels of the Lincoln Memorial as part of the
7 overall interpretation of Lincoln's presidency.

8 But I, you know, I agree it's hard
9 for us to know, you know, what line to tell
10 Congress to draw in creating an exception to
11 legislation that Congress itself passed.

12 It's a little bit presumptuous for us
13 to try to draw that line, but I think it's a high
14 bar. The presumption should be against locating
15 new memorials on the Mall.

16 And I agree I think the focus of this
17 one is sufficiently targeted and narrow that it
18 doesn't clear that bar for me. That's all.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Thank you very
20 much, Commissioner Fountain.

21 Any further discussion?

22 Commissioner Sullivan.

1 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yes. I just
2 want to, on behalf of NCPC, align our comments
3 with Commissioner Fountain and Commissioner
4 Batcheler's.

5 It's really interesting, as somebody
6 who's just coming to this meeting for the first
7 time, to look at the agenda today and just a
8 number of, you know, museums and memorials that
9 are looking to be on the Reserve. I mean, it's
10 very clear what -- how difficult this is.

11 And we continue to be very supportive
12 of the Commemorative Works Act and want, you
13 know, hopefully there's flexibility here and, you
14 know, Area 1 is, I think, a great opportunity,
15 but I think that's where we are on this.

16 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Thank you.

17 Any other discussion?

18 Okay. I think that, just to sort of
19 summarize, I believe when this was in front of us
20 during the previous Congress, we submitted a
21 letter at that time as well.

22 It doesn't sound like anything really

1 has changed from what we said before. So, we
2 will update that and share it around and make
3 sure that that accurately captures where we are
4 today for your review before we submit.

5 Okay. So, our next piece -- we're
6 taking two pieces at the same time because when
7 these two pieces of legislation were originally
8 introduced, they were together and they have
9 since been separated out.

10 So, and those pieces of legislation
11 are H.R.1330, which is Smithsonian National
12 Museum of the American Latino Act, and H.R.1329,
13 Smithsonian American Women's History Museum Act.

14 Both of these bills allow for an
15 exception to the Commemorative Works Act and
16 allow for siting the museum, or museums, within
17 the Reserve as these are two separate museums,
18 two physically separate.

19 They were both introduced by
20 Representative Malliotakis, which I am sure I
21 just butchered, on February 13th, 2025.

22 They were referred to Committee on

1 House Administration and the Committee of Natural
2 Resources.

3 So, for these two bills we do not
4 have anyone signed up in advance, but we open it
5 up for anyone who is attending from the public if
6 you have an interest in speaking on these two
7 pieces of legislation.

8 Okay. To that end, I think I've
9 pretty much summarized these two. These would be
10 two new museums to American women's history and
11 to Latino on the National Mall both within the
12 Reserve.

13 I believe you all can well remember
14 the discussions about those with Smithsonian
15 previously when Commissioner May was here before
16 he retired.

17 So, for those who weren't there, it
18 was generally that there are other places these
19 should go, that it should not be within the
20 Reserve.

21 I believe that the site selection
22 study did not -- it was the opinion that it did

1 not thoroughly look at the abundance of
2 opportunities that were potentially available at
3 the time, including reuse of existing buildings
4 and the potential for those uses to take place
5 there, and to not look at building something new
6 really in the heart of the National Mall.

7 So, that will give you sort of an
8 idea of where this commission came from
9 previously on this topic.

10 And I think you're seeing a trend
11 here, right? Everything that was in Congress
12 during the last Congress that did not make its
13 way through is being reintroduced very much at
14 the beginning of the year and continues to do so.

15 Commissioner Batcheler.

16 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yes. Thank
17 you.

18 I just wanted to share, which I
19 believe was shared the last time this came up,
20 also, that the Commission of Fine Arts also did
21 have similar advice about this site selection for
22 both of these museums and urged that the

1 Smithsonian consider these broadly as a way of
2 expanding their campus rather than sort of
3 stuffing them all with more museums.

4 There were several sites that were
5 focused on last time, but our commission
6 identified a potential nexus along 10th Street
7 especially, at this point, if there is sort of
8 forward movement on the disposal of Forrestal
9 Complex, which Commissioner Tunstall Williams can
10 speak to, but I believe that that is one of the
11 ones that is being considered.

12 That then perhaps advances the
13 schedule when these -- that site might become
14 available, which I think is something that has
15 scared off various applicants in the past, but it
16 might be an opportunity now.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: I can
19 speak to Commissioner Batcheler's comments.

20 Yes, the Forrestal building
21 disposition is very much on the list. I think
22 the big challenge that we continue to have is

1 that the Department of Energy still occupies that
2 building and may have to identify a new site for
3 them.

4 As I've heard as recently as today,
5 there isn't a site yet, but it is definitely in
6 the works.

7 It is one that is -- I think everyone
8 is anxious to find a higher and better use for
9 that building, but, again, it comes down to the
10 jigsaw puzzle of moving agencies around and
11 finding that location.

12 So, it's certainly not first out of
13 the gate, but the, you know, the GSA regional
14 office building should be coming to market soon.
15 Liberty Loan Building is, I believe, if not
16 posted, posted imminently. I think those are the
17 first two that we'll start to see.

18 There's been a lot of conversation
19 about the Department of Housing and Urban
20 Development. That one is also coming soon. FBI.
21 So, there's a lot sort of swirling right now.

22 Again, timelines are still fuzzy

1 because it's dependent on us being able to
2 relocate agencies.

3 And while restructuring is sort of in
4 the mix, they're still trying to figure out how
5 much space they need.

6 So, I think probably by fall there
7 might be a better forecast of what this looks
8 like. That's my best guess.

9 But definitely I think all of those -
10 - Agriculture is another one. Both of those
11 buildings have been mentioned as possible
12 candidates to be disposed of.

13 So, keep your eyes on GSA. I'm not
14 quite sure where we're going to land, but it is
15 lots of opportunity there.

16 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
17 Commissioner.

18 Commissioner Sullivan.

19 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yes. I just
20 want to underscore that the last time that this
21 was in front of our commission, the National
22 Capital Planning Commission, for an information

1 presentation, the Commission supported looking
2 very strongly at Independence Avenue, Forrestal
3 Building, of course that site, and then out to
4 Banneker and really taking advantage of all the
5 opportunities that Commissioner Tunstall Williams
6 just said.

7 And I just want to underscore that
8 Forrestal Building sits on about 11 acres of land
9 and right across the street from Smithsonian
10 Castle and the Haupt Garden. I mean, the
11 connection for a new museum would be superb.

12 So, and the other thing is if this
13 bill were to be passed and the Commission was to
14 get a site in the Reserve, the preferred site has
15 a lot of complications that I think would need to
16 be addressed.

17 And I'm not sure if Commissioner
18 Maloney is going to be talking about that, but I
19 just wanted to put that on record, too, which we
20 also discussed during the information
21 presentation.

22 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,

1 Commissioner.

2 Commissioner Maloney.

3 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Well, I
4 certainly agree with all the comments that have
5 been expressed and it seems to me this is another
6 situation where we should reiterate the position
7 that this commission has previously taken,
8 especially with what is very clear forward
9 movement on Forrestal and other buildings in
10 southwest.

11 It is a changed circumstance and, I
12 think, in favor of memorial sponsors and museum
13 sponsors are looking very seriously at these
14 additional locations that are now becoming
15 realistic.

16 So, I agree with everyone's comments.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Thank you.

18 Any further discussion?

19 Okay. With that, we will update our
20 previous letter to also highlight the new
21 opportunities that are available that were not
22 considered before, and maybe not even available

1 at the time, and circulate for your review.

2 Okay. Moving right along, let's see
3 where we are. I believe we are at agenda item on
4 H.R.2121, which is the Commission to study the
5 creation of a National Museum of Irish American
6 History.

7 And so, let me run you through a bit
8 of the details. So, this creates a commission to
9 study the possibility of creating a national
10 museum of Irish American history.

11 It directs the Commission to report
12 to the President and to the Congress on possible
13 locations for the museum in Washington, D.C., and
14 its environs, to be considered in consultation
15 with the National Capital Planning Commission and
16 the Commission of Fine Arts and the Department of
17 the Interior and the Smithsonian.

18 And it requires commission to develop
19 recommendations for a legislative plan of action
20 to create construction of the museum, which is
21 very similar to the other legislation that we
22 originally spoke of.

1 So, this is new. We have not seen
2 this before. So, I'll open it up for discussion.

3 Commissioner Tunstall Williams.

4 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: I
5 mean, it seems we're on a sort of repeat today,
6 but, for the sake of argument, I think that all
7 the comments could align themselves with the
8 museum for the Italian American history.

9 I don't think there's anything
10 different with this and that it's, you know, the
11 proliferation of these sort of specific and
12 narrower and narrower groups.

13 There's just, I mean, we have a
14 capacity issue and not that it's not valid that
15 we should be celebrating the contribution of all
16 the people that make up the United States, I
17 think when we start to get into these siloed
18 museums, I think we're going to, at least within
19 the District, rapidly run out of space and
20 interest and viability, I think.

21 So, I would just align myself with
22 what we said earlier and I'll leave it at that.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: I'll concur
3 with that.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Commissioner
5 Batcheler.

6 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yes, same.
7 Concur. And just maybe to note one difference
8 between this and the one we already considered
9 for Italian American museum, is that this
10 discusses possible locations for a museum in
11 Washington, D.C., and its environs.

12 So, I don't know which environs
13 they're thinking about, but it -- this one they
14 might be more open to considering other sites.

15 But I do agree that the comments that
16 we made previously would apply directly to this
17 one as well.

18 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. I'm seeing a
19 lot of head nodding. Great. Okay. Thank you.
20 We made quick work of that one.

21 Where are we now? Mr. McGraw, I'm
22 just checking in to make sure the representative

1 hasn't joined us.

2 MR. MCGRAW: I'm not seeing them at
3 this time.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. All right.
5 Then we'll move along. So, our next agenda item
6 would be S.1088, and the companion in the House,
7 2290, bills to provide that the memorial to
8 commemorate the sacrifice and service of the
9 women who worked on the home front to support the
10 efforts of the United States military during
11 World War II may be located on the National Mall,
12 and for other purposes.

13 The Senate version of this bill was
14 introduced by Senator Jeanne Shaheen on March
15 24th, 2025. It was referred to the Senate
16 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

17 The House Bill 2290 was introduced by
18 representative Debbie Dingell on March 24th,
19 2025, and the bill was referred to the Committee
20 on Natural Resources.

21 Raya Kenney, the Executive Director
22 of the World War II's memorial -- the World War

1 II Women's Memorial Foundation, is with us today
2 to testify on behalf of the bill.

3 Mr. Fox, could you promote Ms.
4 Kenney, please.

5 MR. FOX: Sorry, Chair Stidham. I
6 just need to let you know that I believe that
7 Congressman Moolenaar is also in the meeting. I
8 wasn't sure if he can hear me.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Ms. Kenney,
10 we're going to switch over to another item real
11 quick and we'll come right back to you. Sorry
12 about this.

13 MS. KENNEY: No worries. Thank you.

14 CHAIR STIDHAM: All right. Mr.
15 McGraw, remind me of which one this is. This is
16 Adams, yes?

17 MR. MCGRAW: Yes, that's correct.

18 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. And so,
19 Mr. Fox, if you can promote him, that would be
20 great.

21 Congressman, thank you for joining
22 us.

1 CONGRESSMAN MOOLENAAR: All right.
2 Thank you. I'm celebrating my wife's birthday
3 today and I appreciate you giving me the
4 opportunity to speak with you.

5 CHAIR STIDHAM: Absolutely. Please
6 proceed whenever you're ready.

7 CONGRESSMAN MOOLENAAR: Okay. Well,
8 first of all, I appreciate the important work you
9 guys do and, you know, my goal is really to honor
10 one of our key founding fathers as well as the
11 family.

12 And it's hard because you say "the
13 Adams Family" and we all think about the, you
14 know, the TV show or the movie, "The Addams
15 Family," but we're talking about John Adams,
16 Abigail Adams, John Quincy, Henry Adams. There
17 was a whole family who dedicated so much to our
18 country's future.

19 And when you think of John Adams,
20 obviously the second president of the United
21 States, you know, he was someone who was on the
22 committee to author the Declaration of

1 Independence.

2 In fact, it was him that actually
3 nominated Thomas Jefferson to write the
4 Declaration of Independence.

5 And he was also the one who played a
6 key role in nominating George Washington to be
7 our commanding general.

8 And during the Revolution, you know,
9 it was considered Washington was the sword of the
10 Revolution, Jefferson was considered the pen, and
11 Adams was considered the voice of the Revolution.

12 And during that time, he negotiated a
13 key loan from the Dutch during the war and
14 without that loan we might not have been able to
15 fight the war.

16 His wife Abigail was very influential
17 politically and basically served as his
18 unofficial Chief of Staff while he was President.

19 His son John Quincy was the sixth
20 president of the United States and also defended
21 slaves from the Amistad ship in front of the
22 Supreme Court, won their freedom.

1 And his son Charles Adams was the
2 American minister, the Court of St. James, during
3 the Civil War, which he presented the recognition
4 of the confederate states.

5 And so, when you combine all this
6 service, you know, as founders, diplomats,
7 presidents, and people who really represented the
8 core American values, it's pretty amazing when
9 you consider we've got on the National Mall a
10 monument to Washington, we've got a memorial to
11 Jefferson, but Adams has somehow slipped through
12 the cracks, if you will, and, you know, we have a
13 tremendous opportunity.

14 We've extended the time for the Adams
15 Memorial Commission and I'm honored to serve as
16 part of that.

17 And we're building a team of people
18 who really are dedicated to do this and it's
19 something that, you know, I hope that, you know,
20 as we move a bill through Congress, I'm committed
21 to ensure that, you know, this memorial
22 commission continues and recognizes the

1 important, you know, contributions of the family
2 to the country.

3 And, you know, it also provides for
4 consideration of a small area within the Reserve
5 in South President's Park near the White House
6 and, ironically, the first president who was a
7 resident of the White House was John Adams.

8 And we've looked at that as a
9 potential site for the Adams Memorial and hope
10 you agree that, you know, a prominent place for
11 people to come and appreciate the contribution of
12 John Adams, as well as the entire family, would
13 be very appropriate.

14 So, again, I thank you for the
15 opportunity and look forward to, you know,
16 talking with you in the future as things develop.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Thank you very
18 much.

19 Are there any questions for the
20 congressman?

21 Okay. Seeing none, sir, you can
22 rejoin your wife and tell her "happy birthday"

1 from us.

2 CONGRESSMAN MOOLENAAR: All right.

3 Thank you very much.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

5 CONGRESSMAN MOOLENAAR: Appreciate
6 what you do.

7 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. Have a
8 great afternoon.

9 CONGRESSMAN MOOLENAAR: You, too.
10 Thanks.

11 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. To back us up
12 just a little bit, this is H.R.2306. It has been
13 -- I should add before we go on to the specifics
14 of the legislation, that Jackie Cushman, who is
15 the Chair of the Adams Memorial Commission, has
16 provided written testimony which was in your
17 packet and you should have received that.

18 There are no other planned
19 testimonies. So, a little bit about the bill.
20 The Adams Memorial Commission has had a lot of
21 updates over the years and this particular piece
22 of legislation extends the authority of the Adams

1 Memorial Commission to December 2nd, 2032.

2 Their authorization of both the
3 Commission and the memorial's authorization --
4 you know what I'm trying to say. I don't know
5 why it's not coming out -- expires in December,
6 both of those pieces of legislation. So, this
7 piece would extend both the Commission and the
8 Memorial to 2032.

9 It overrides the Commemorative Works
10 Act prohibition on siting new memorials within
11 the Reserve and also allows for the memorial to
12 be located depicting family -- okay. We'll skip
13 over that.

14 It allows for the memorials located
15 in the Reserve. And since the establishment of -
16 - blah, blah, blah. You already know that.

17 In addition, it authorizes
18 appropriations of \$50 million based on the
19 matching one-to-one basis by nonfederal
20 contributions.

21 And it allows for -- I already said
22 that. Okay. Basically, this piece is amending

1 what was previously on the books to extend the
2 time period and allow for the use of -- allow for
3 federal funds, in addition to nonfederal funds,
4 and allows for the placement within the Reserve
5 specifically looking at the site on the Ellipse.

6 Sorry that was a mess. So, any
7 discussion?

8 Commissioner Batcheler.

9 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: First, a
10 question. Do we -- I believe it was originally
11 authorized in 2001; is that correct?

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: I believe so, yes.

13 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yeah.

14 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes, yes.

15 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: So, this
16 would be 2032.

17 Are there criteria that are
18 established under NCMAC for what kind of forward
19 movement or, I mean, what would -- I mean, we
20 could just keep extending this for 100 years or
21 what?

22 At what point do they need to get a

1 new authorization?

2 CHAIR STIDHAM: They need a new
3 authorization when their previous authorization
4 expires, which is set by Congress.

5 So, when it expires with Congress, is
6 when they will insert new legislation to extend
7 their authority to create their memorial.

8 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Right.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: So, it's our advice to
10 Congress, at this point, whether that extension
11 should be granted.

12 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: All right.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: A little bit more of
14 the history. The memorial did go through site
15 selection at one point and I believe they were
16 sent back, that the sites that they were
17 interested in did not get great conversation at
18 this commission and things sort of just didn't
19 come back together, but the Commission has been
20 meeting for the last year, I believe.

21 I believe they had a number of
22 meetings and are looking to move this memorial

1 along at this time.

2 So, they do have energy behind it and
3 have most of the members -- they have a quorum,
4 at least, for their presidential commission to be
5 able to move forward.

6 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Okay. I'll
7 reserve my comments for after Commissioner
8 Fountain.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Commissioner
10 Fountain.

11 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah. I just
12 wanted to address Commissioner Batcheler's
13 question.

14 Section 8903(e) of the Act does
15 establish criteria under which the secretary or
16 the administrator can extend the seven-year
17 authorization period, and those criteria are
18 fairly strict and you have to have met certain
19 progress milestones.

20 There are no criteria for Congress
21 itself to extend a deadline. That's at the
22 prerogative of Congress and there's nothing in

1 the Commemorative Works Act that confines that
2 discretion in any way.

3 CHAIR STIDHAM: So, the only thing
4 that I would add for (e), that is an authority
5 and the two criteria have to do really with where
6 they are in terms of construction and permitting
7 and fund-raising, which is different than where
8 we are today with the Adams Memorial.

9 This does require new legislation and
10 doesn't allow for the administrative extension
11 that would be to a memorial that I believe has 75
12 percent of their funding in hand and are
13 imminently ready to construct.

14 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Right. I have
15 a separate question. This is the way the summary
16 is presented and I haven't gone back to the
17 original bill.

18 Is this pretty well specifying that
19 the memorial will go in that particular area
20 designated on the -- what they're calling the
21 Adams Commemorative Area or something like that?

22 CHAIR STIDHAM: Let me pull that back

1 up.

2 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Is that the
3 upshot of the bill is that it specifies that
4 that's where it will go?

5 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: I believe it
6 says it may be located --

7 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yeah, I --

8 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Okay. Okay.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: -- do believe it's
10 "may." Let me verify.

11 May be located within the area
12 generally depicted as "Adams Memorial: Eligible
13 Additional Area" on map titled "Adams Memorial:
14 Eligible Additional Area" prepared by the Adams
15 Memorial Commission and dated February 25th,
16 2025.

17 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Okay. Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: Mr. McGraw, can you
20 share that -- or, Laurel, can you share that map?
21 Do we have that map?

22 Staff is pulling that up.

1 Or maybe not. Laurel? Michael?
2 While we're waiting, Commissioner Batcheler, why
3 don't you go ahead?

4 MR. MCGRAW: One second.

5 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: My comment
7 was actually about that site. So, it would be
8 helpful to have that.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. It looks like
10 it's coming.

11 Something is weird going on with the
12 PDF. So, do you see in the far middle -- let's
13 see here. I'm trying to annotate this. The
14 orange triangle.

15 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Right. I
16 guess my comment was about a site. And if I
17 remember correctly from when we were discussing
18 the site selection some years ago for this
19 memorial, they're interested in also an
20 educational component.

21 It's not -- in other words, I believe
22 I remember that there was some kind of building

1 associated with this, not just, you know, a
2 statue of the various Adamses. So, I am
3 concerned about this site given that.

4 There are several other memorials on
5 the White House grounds and the Ellipse, but they
6 tend to be statues or fountains or obelisks or,
7 you know, other things that are basically points
8 that are seen -- that are not occupied, but are
9 basically seen from the outside.

10 There is, on this little triangular
11 site, already the little -- I guess it's a
12 visitor center, pavilion, and there's quite a lot
13 of security apparatus and fencing and so forth at
14 this E Street entrance to the White House
15 complex.

16 The views within this area are very
17 carefully managed, I mean, as they are, of
18 course, throughout the Mall, and I would be
19 concerned about a building on this site.

20 I'm not sure this is an appropriate
21 place for something that is more than just
22 another obelisk or something.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. You are
2 correct. There was a building in their previous
3 memorial program.

4 To date, we have been working with
5 the Commission and that has not come up this go-
6 around, but we don't know much about their
7 memorial program at this point.

8 Other discussion?

9 Commissioner Fountain.

10 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: I'm more
11 receptive to creating an exception for this, you
12 know, for this memorial, whatever it's going to
13 be and I take Commissioner Batcheler's comments
14 as to whether it's a building or an object and
15 how that may make a difference.

16 But setting that aside, I'm more
17 receptive to creating an exception for an element
18 at this site than I am for a number of the other
19 exceptions that we've been asked to consider for
20 two reasons.

21 And the primary one is really that
22 very strong connection that the Congress have

1 pointed out and that it almost makes an exact
2 straight line connecting the Jefferson and
3 Washington monuments to this proposed one and, in
4 a way, it sort of completes the great cross
5 access that we talk about.

6 You've got Lincoln and Grant at
7 either end of the east-west access, and now you
8 would complete the north-south access with Adams
9 at the northern end of it.

10 And given his prominence as a
11 founding father and, you know, I think that's --
12 I think that's appropriate and, for that reason,
13 I'd be receptive to an exception.

14 And the other reason is I have always
15 found that whole Ellipse area to, frankly, be a
16 great void. There seems to be very little
17 happening there. It's not very accessible.

18 Usually it's fenced off for people
19 even trying to just walk across it. You've got
20 the roadway around it which is now a parking lot.

21 Anything that can start to help to
22 reinvigorate that whole space, I think, would be

1 a good thing. So, I could -- I myself could get
2 behind this.

3 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
4 Commissioner.

5 Commissioner Batcheler.

6 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yeah. That
7 actually raises a question and I -- Commissioner
8 Fountain mentioned that this area is often closed
9 off, which is true. Or even if it isn't actually
10 closed off, it often feels like it's closed off.

11 So, I guess it would be helpful to
12 understand more about what kind of access the
13 memorial is hoping for if they would be locating
14 themselves within the White House boundary and it
15 also really would be helpful to understand more
16 about their program.

17 I mean, just to the north is a statue
18 of Alexander Hamilton, you know, so -- but I
19 think they're looking at something more than a
20 statue.

21 Is there any way to get that
22 information before we're weighing in on this

1 site?

2 And understanding also that this is
3 not a site selection process, this is just --

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: --
6 identifying another potential site. But since
7 they foundered on the site selection process last
8 time, I'm a little leery of having a specific
9 site -- having their hopes on a specific site if
10 we don't have enough information to determine
11 whether --

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Well, just to add in
13 sort of my concern, I see because this is part of
14 their legislation and if enacted into law, then
15 this would allow them to be at this site and
16 forego site selection.

17 So, I think one of our concerns
18 related to the legislation is calling out a site
19 before the process.

20 It sort of trumps the process of site
21 selection and keys into one site before there is
22 really much known about what the memorial program

1 is. So, that would be one of our concerns.

2 Commissioner Fountain.

3 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Well, that
4 does go back to the question I had asked before,
5 which is whether the statute specified that it
6 will be at this site or whether it's permissive.

7 CHAIR STIDHAM: It's permissive. It
8 says, may be located.

9 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Right. And
10 so, my understanding is when we have language
11 like that, is that there still is a site
12 selection process, but this is a site that may be
13 considered notwithstanding that it's in the
14 Reserve.

15 CHAIR STIDHAM: That is correct.

16 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Okay.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: I believe that it --
18 there would still be site selection, but by
19 allowing them to call out this site, then it puts
20 them in the Reserve in this site.

21 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah, and it
22 certainly would put a heavy thumb on the scale

1 for --

2 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yes.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: And then just
6 one point of clarification. I think immediately
7 to the north is the equestrian statue of General
8 Sherman.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes, that's correct.

10 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: And then
11 Hamilton is beyond that.

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Commissioner Sullivan.

13 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yes. I just
14 want to say that we are certainly supportive of
15 the reauthorization, but I concur with my fellow
16 commissioners that it's hard to give a "yes" to a
17 specific site without knowing anything about the
18 design.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

20 Commissioner Maloney.

21 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Thanks. I was
22 waiting especially for NCPC's comments to see

1 what you thought.

2 I'm inclined, like my fellow
3 commissioners, to view this as something that
4 does have more of a claim to being located within
5 the Reserve with the obvious connection to the
6 presidents, especially, and the Ellipse does seem
7 to be generally the logical area where this might
8 go best.

9 It is an odd -- as it's been pointed
10 out, it is an odd public space with a very large
11 area and a collection of different monuments of -
12 - some reasonably significant, others less so,
13 you know, the Boy Scouts and the providers of the
14 District of Columbia and various things that have
15 collected over the years and none of them, I
16 think, spoil the space largely because they are
17 small.

18 And most of them are simply statues,
19 but there are larger things like the pavilion
20 that has been there, the things that are
21 scattered around.

22 And given the size of the space, it

1 seems that it could conceivably accommodate
2 another modest monument.

3 Whether or not that includes a
4 building, I think, is a key question, but I
5 think, again, you sort of want to be able to
6 suggest it might be appropriate with conditions.

7 And one of the conditions might be to
8 suggest that the Ellipse, as a whole, might be a
9 reasonable location without specifying a
10 particular spot on the Ellipse.

11 You know, I think it's to the point
12 of the value of the process to evaluate different
13 sites.

14 I think it would be better -- if
15 Congress does feel it should be authorized to go
16 in the Reserve, it seems to me it would be better
17 at least to do a sort of evaluation of various
18 sites on the Ellipse.

19 So, if not, other places in the
20 Reserve although the Ellipse does seem to be the
21 sort of logical place.

22 So, anyway, that's just my thoughts.

1 I'll leave it at that.

2 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.

3 Commissioner Imamura.

4 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Sure. Thank
5 you, Madam Chair.

6 I just wanted to comment that AOC
7 aligns ourselves with the comments by
8 Commissioner Maloney and Commission Fountain, as
9 well as Commissioner Batcheler.

10 So, we're certainly open to extending
11 the time frame and further analysis, I think, is
12 needed.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.

14 Commissioner Williams.

15 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: I was
16 just going to say the same thing.

17 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: I
19 agree it's worthy of reauthorizing as well as
20 locating within the Reserve, but does require
21 additional analysis on a specific site as well as
22 program.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Okay. Thank
2 you.

3 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Just one more
4 question.

5 CHAIR STIDHAM: Sorry. I'm sorry,
6 Commissioner Batcheler.

7 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: If we're
8 proposing that they consider other sites within
9 the Ellipse, is there any -- are there any -- I
10 mean, obviously we wouldn't want to put it
11 directly on the access, but are there any other
12 sort of comments that we want to give about what
13 would be an appropriate site, I guess, that their
14 analysis should include viewshed analysis and
15 security analysis to make sure that it can be
16 accessed at all times?

17 I don't know if there's anything else
18 that other commission members would like to add.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: Others have any other
20 ideas related either to conditions as
21 Commissioner Maloney suggested, but also any
22 parameters around their investigation that we

1 would like to express?

2 I think definitely you should write
3 an operational needs because this is an area that
4 is shut down, reopened and shut down multiple
5 times a day for security purposes.

6 So, the fact that it could be with
7 inside that security perimeter should be pointed
8 out, I believe.

9 Okay. Think about it. When we
10 circulate the letter if there's something that
11 comes to mind at that point, please let us know
12 and we'll be sure to include it.

13 Okay. So, we can take down the map
14 and bring back Raya.

15 MS. KENNEY: Hello.

16 CHAIR STIDHAM: Hi. Welcome back.
17 Sorry for that deviation.

18 MS. KENNEY: No problem.

19 I have provided letters of support
20 and slides for your personal review, but wanted
21 to let you know that they don't need to be up on
22 the screen right now.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Great. All the
2 commissioners received that in their packages.
3 So, if you would introduce yourself and then walk
4 us through your testimony, that would be great.

5 MS. KENNEY: Absolutely. Thank you so
6 much.

7 Hello. My name is Raya Kenney and I
8 am the Executive Director of the World War II
9 Women's Memorial Foundation.

10 Our mission is to establish a
11 monument to more than 18 million women who worked
12 on the home front during World War II and I'm
13 here to testify today in support of the World War
14 II Women's Memorial Location Act, S.1088 and
15 H.R.2290. Thank you for the opportunity to
16 testify before the Commission about this effort.

17 A little bit of backstory. This
18 initiative began more than a decade ago with a
19 fifth grade school project.

20 My teacher asked me to build a model
21 monument dedicated to someone or something that
22 hasn't yet been commemorated in Washington, D.C.,

1 but deserves to be.

2 And around that time I had just
3 watched A League of Their Own, which is a film
4 about the women baseball players of World War II
5 who stepped up to the plate, so to speak, to keep
6 baseball in American lives and I was very
7 inspired by them.

8 And so, after further research, I
9 discovered the millions of women who kept our
10 factories and our farms running, and I decided to
11 center my project around the working women whose
12 patriotism helped us to win World War II.

13 I spent hours reading about the women
14 who worked on the home front. These "Rosies"
15 hailed from every single state in the union.
16 They served in over 80 different jobs as coders,
17 pilots, lumberjacks, engineers, military
18 equipment manufacturers and more.

19 These women were the foundation of
20 the war effort building planes, ships, tanks and
21 other equipment that was needed by the American
22 troops.

1 In fact, many of the veterans I
2 traveled to Normandy with last year speak in loud
3 praise of the women who produced their bullets
4 and their vests and their munitions.

5 The Rosies changed the landscape of
6 the American workforce and helped us secure
7 allied victory.

8 Between 1940 and 1945 American women
9 went from being 27 percent of the workforce to
10 nearly 40 percent.

11 Based on my research about these very
12 formidable women, I built the model using wood,
13 concrete, fake grass and this little silver
14 Sharpie pen and presented it to my teacher.

15 And upon seeing the completed
16 memorial, she encouraged me to pursue it
17 seriously.

18 Over the next several years I reached
19 out to the National Park Service, the National
20 Capital Planning Commission, elected officials,
21 historians, to advocate for the memorial and
22 learn more about the process that was established

1 by the Commemorative Works Act.

2 In 2016, administrators from the
3 National Park Service told me that the
4 preliminary design aligned with the criteria
5 sought out for the memorial and encouraged me to
6 pursue its construction.

7 Soon thereafter, we took a critical
8 step in the process as delineated by the CWA and
9 we established the foundation as a 501(c)(3)
10 nonprofit to serve as a sponsor group to
11 introduce the necessary legislation and then
12 ultimately be responsible for the funding of the
13 memorial.

14 And after multiple years of advocacy
15 on Capitol Hill, the legislation authorizing the
16 foundation to establish the World War II Women's
17 Memorial in Washington, D.C., was enacted in
18 2022.

19 We were absolutely thrilled and I was
20 honored to have the opportunity to testify before
21 this very body in support of that legislation.

22 Following the enactment of the

1 authorizing legislation, we began working with
2 site selection experts and also exploring the
3 most appropriate location for this work within
4 our nation's capital.

5 And after a significant amount of
6 research, we determined that the most appropriate
7 location with the strongest thematic and
8 historical nexus for the World War II Women's
9 Memorial is either just adjacent to the World War
10 II Memorial or slightly northwest of the World
11 War II Memorial and Constitution Gardens.

12 And it's important because, in the
13 1940s, there were "government girls" who worked
14 in the temporary munitions buildings that were
15 there performing essential tasks like managing
16 records and analyzing information to support the
17 war effort.

18 And some of them even advanced to go
19 on to work for the FBI or the OSS, which then
20 became the CIA.

21 Just as the Vietnam Women's Memorial
22 was dedicated just yards away from the Vietnam

1 Veterans' Memorial to pay tribute to the military
2 and civilian women who served then, I believe the
3 Rosie Memorial should be dedicated at one of
4 these sites that is in walking distance of the
5 World War II Memorial given the strong nexus.

6 While the National Mall includes a
7 memorial to the men who served in World War II,
8 it does notably lack a prominent work that honors
9 the service and sacrifice of the American
10 civilian women of World War II, and I believe
11 this memorial would help to complete that story
12 of the war in America's front yard.

13 And that's why we're seeking your
14 support for the enactment of S.1088 and H.R.2290
15 to make the memorial eligible to be built in
16 either Area I or the Reserve within walking
17 distance of the World War II memorial.

18 Last Congress, this piece of
19 legislation garnered over 60 bipartisan
20 cosponsors in the House. And on March 24th,
21 2025, Senators Shaheen and Blackburn together
22 with Representative Dingell and Representative

1 Fulcher, reintroduced the legislation on a
2 bipartisan, bicameral basis. The legislation is
3 already gaining momentum with over 23 cosponsors
4 to date.

5 I must note that we have also
6 carefully crafted the legislation to facilitate
7 an open and collaborative site selection
8 discussion with this body.

9 And to that end, the World War II
10 Women's Memorial Location Act states that the
11 memorial commemorates the service and the
12 sacrifice of the women who worked on the home
13 front during World War II "may be located on the
14 National Mall" as opposed to "shall be located on
15 the National Mall."

16 This approach would allow the
17 Foundation to work with you on site selection and
18 not dictate the area of the site specifically.

19 Our ultimate goal is to collaborate
20 with the Committee to find the best possible
21 space with a strongly rooted historical
22 connection for this memorial of clear, preeminent

1 and lasting significance.

2 Importantly, also, the memorial, as
3 currently envisioned, would be relatively small
4 in size and unobtrusive to the national
5 landscape.

6 We propose a modest memorial that is
7 less than a quarter of an acre of space. And
8 while the design will not be discussed, refined,
9 or really decided upon until later in the
10 process, I'd like to share a little bit about the
11 Foundation's current thinking just for your
12 context.

13 We currently envision short, about 2-
14 1/2 feet tall, granite pillars that are
15 constructed in the shape of a V, which symbolizes
16 victory and was actually a common formation
17 before school assemblies and baseball games in
18 World War II.

19 These pillars would represent the
20 women's roles as the pillars of strength and as
21 the backbone of the war effort and they would be
22 etched with the titles of the industries that the

1 women worked in during the war.

2 Truly, the memorial is intended to be
3 an oasis to offer space for reflection and
4 interaction.

5 It would allow visitors to sit within
6 the raised V in the center to sit and reflect on
7 the contributions and the ultimate impact of
8 these Rosies.

9 With its modest scale, I would say it
10 would be more akin to the George Mason Memorial
11 or perhaps the Kennedy Flame in Arlington
12 Cemetery. Small, but very impactful.

13 In my view, swift action on the
14 establishment of this memorial is vital. Many of
15 our Rosies are celebrating their 100th birthdays.
16 The oldest living one I think is 109 years old at
17 this time.

18 I talked with Phyllis Gould, who was
19 a "Rosie" who worked as a welder in the
20 shipyards, and she told me that she said when the
21 Rosies are honored for their service, she wants
22 it, quote, to be something permanent because

1 these women did every job that was vacated by a
2 guy going into the service, end quote.

3 My dearest friend is Mae Krier, she's
4 now 99 years old, and she worked on B-17s and B-
5 29s during the war, and she remains a powerful
6 advocate for the Rosies to this day.

7 During our conversations, she's
8 expressed her disappointment that many Americans
9 remain unaware of the Rosies' impact.

10 Much like today's veterans, these
11 women were largely forgotten even after bravely
12 and patriotically serving their country and we
13 cannot allow their stories to be lost history.

14 As then-General Eisenhower said, the
15 contribution of the women of America, whether on
16 a farm, or in the factory, or in uniform, to D-
17 Day was a sine qua non, or necessary for, the
18 invasion effort.

19 Today, as we near the 80th
20 anniversary of the end of the war and the 250th
21 birthday of our great democracy, it is really
22 time to ensure that the story of these American

1 women of World War II are eternally etched into
2 our collective memory.

3 So, thank you for inviting me to
4 testify to talk about this important memorial and
5 the legislation that is just critical to bringing
6 it to life.

7 Thank you for allowing me to
8 highlight these women and for supporting this
9 project. And, lastly, thank you to the Rosies
10 for allowing me to tell their stories.

11 If there's one thing I've learned
12 from them, it's that when we work together, we
13 can do it.

14 Thank you so much. I'm happy to take
15 any questions.

16 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. I wasn't
17 sure if you wanted to walk through the
18 presentation that was shared just as you were
19 beginning to speak. It might help with the
20 commissioners during the discussion.

21 MS. KENNEY: Absolutely.

22 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Laurel, if you

1 wouldn't mind bringing that up, please.

2 Okay. Go ahead and walk us through.

3 MS. KENNEY: Absolutely. The first
4 slide are a few different sites that we were
5 looking at, as I mentioned in the testimony.

6 The two smaller circles are the ones
7 that are just adjacent to the World War II
8 Memorial and the larger circle is that
9 Constitution Gardens location where the munitions
10 buildings were located.

11 On the right you see that photo of
12 those historic buildings so you have some sort of
13 context for the historical nexus.

14 This is just reference to the bill
15 text that has that "may/shall" differential
16 language and it shows there's Area 1 as well as
17 the Reserve for you guys to consider.

18 And lastly, this is the design.
19 There is me in the lower left-hand corner as a
20 grade student, a mockup of maybe relative scale
21 just so you guys have a sense of what it would
22 look like. And then we have a hand-drawn one on

1 the upper left-hand corner.

2 Again, small, modest, and
3 representative of the type of women these women
4 were and are.

5 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Is that the
6 last slide?

7 MS. KENNEY: Yes.

8 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Any questions?

9 Oh, one. Commissioner Imamura.

10 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you,
11 Madam Chair.

12 Ms. Kenney, I don't have any
13 questions, but just a remark that I just wanted
14 to say thank you for testifying before us this
15 afternoon for your courage to share your vision
16 with us.

17 Your efforts are laudable and
18 whatever the decision of this commission this
19 afternoon and moving forward, certainly your work
20 has caught attention of members of Congress and
21 many others.

22 And so, I say "lean into it" and keep

1 that vision front and center. So, I'm impressed.

2 MS. KENNEY: Thank you so much. I
3 appreciate it.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great. Thank you very
5 much for being here today. We appreciate it.

6 MS. KENNEY: Thank you again.

7 CHAIR STIDHAM: So, Mr. Fox, you can
8 take Ms. Kenney down and I open it up to the
9 Commission for discussion.

10 And just to reiterate, both bills are
11 for siting the memorial within the Reserve and/or
12 Area 1, and it is a "may," and I think Ms. Kenney
13 covered the rest of it.

14 So, I'll open it up for you to hear
15 your feedback.

16 Commissioner Fountain.

17 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah. I
18 actually don't want to put an opinion forth right
19 now, but I did think it was important.

20 And I sent some images to Mr. McGraw
21 that he can perhaps bring up, but women in
22 service in World War II are represented at the

1 existing World War II Memorial.

2 As you probably know, there are 24
3 bas relief panels at the memorial. Three of
4 which very directly commemorate women in service
5 in World War II.

6 And there are inscriptions, you see
7 one of them up there now -- this is from Colonel
8 Oveta Culp Hobby -- that also recognize the
9 service of women in World War II.

10 Can you go to the next one, Michael?
11 There's one from President Roosevelt.

12 I can read that one because I've got
13 it up, but the Roosevelt inscription is, they
14 have given their sons to the military services,
15 they have stoked the furnaces and hurried the
16 factory wheels. They have made the planes and
17 welded the tanks, riveted the ships and rolled
18 the shells.

19 And then three of the -- there's one
20 panel that shows women in industry, including --
21 well, this one shows -- yeah, this is women in
22 the armed services themselves, actually, you

1 know, the WAVES and the WACs and the WRNs that
2 you may remember hearing about.

3 If you go to that first image, I
4 think, Michael, there's one that shows women in
5 industry and then a third panel that shows women
6 working in agriculture during the war.

7 So, just to frame the conversation, I
8 just wanted to make sure that we were all aware
9 of these elements at the existing World War II
10 Memorial.

11 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
12 Commissioner Fountain.

13 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Well, heck,
14 I'll dive in if no one else is going to.

15 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Commissioner
16 Batcheler is going to step in -- oh, maybe not.

17 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Please.

18 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Well, since
19 Commissioner Fountain was going to jump in, I was
20 actually just going to say thank you for
21 providing that background information,
22 commissioner Fountain, because I was wondering

1 whether this type of commemoration might not be
2 better incorporated into the existing World War
3 II Memorial, but you're saying it already is.

4 So, I look forward to hearing your
5 comments on that.

6 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Well, my
7 comments pain me because I think the sponsor -- I
8 just want to congratulate Ms. Kenney for making
9 an excellent presentation.

10 It was very compelling. Made all the
11 right points. They've made all the right
12 decisions to make the case for a site on the
13 Reserve near the World War II Memorial.

14 And, you know, having walked down the
15 very path that she is walking down now, I very
16 much relate to what she's done and what she's
17 accomplished and I want to congratulate her.

18 If the service of women wasn't
19 already very overtly recognized within the
20 existing memorial, which, of course, ABMC
21 designed and developed in the first place, I
22 might have a different opinion.

1 But the fact that they are, leaves me
2 to, I guess, not support an exception to the, you
3 know, the Reserve clause as it were in the
4 Commemorative Works Act and it kind of relates to
5 some of the other discussion we've had with other
6 proposals.

7 As you start to carve off different
8 segments of a population, it starts to become
9 problematic.

10 And so, if we call out the service of
11 women as being entitled to their own separate
12 adjunct to the existing World War II Memorial,
13 then what other segments of World War II service
14 advocate for their own adjunct element? And I
15 just think it's fraught to open up that door.

16 I mean, I think it would be a worthy
17 addition, but we are confronted with the
18 legislative prescription that there be no new
19 memorials on the Mall, or in the Reserve.

20 And I think this one comes close to
21 that bar, not knowing where that bar is, but,
22 with great reluctance, I wouldn't support

1 endorsing exemption to the existing statute.

2 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.

3 Commissioner Sullivan.

4 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Sorry, I think
5 I jumped in front of Commissioner Batcheler here,
6 but I actually just had a quick question.

7 Would you remind me about what the
8 recommendation is? I thought it was to broaden
9 the location criteria to Area 1.

10 Could you just go through that one
11 more time?

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yeah, absolutely. So,
13 this memorial doesn't have an existing
14 authorization.

15 Laurel, correct me if I have that
16 wrong. We have so many going on. I am starting
17 to get them mixed up.

18 MS. HAMMIG: It is currently
19 authorized, but in Area 2.

20 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. Thank you.

21 MS. HAMMIG: Yes.

22 CHAIR STIDHAM: So, this legislation

1 would be authorizing it for Area 1 or the
2 Reserve. May, not requiring, but may allow.

3 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you, Laurel.
6 Ms. Batcheler.

7 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: I'm
8 struggling with this one a little bit because I
9 think that the World War II Memorial should
10 contain all of this content.

11 Perhaps it does contain all of this
12 content already, perhaps that's not visible
13 enough, but I fear that breaking off a separate
14 piece of the people who contributed to America's
15 effort in World War II would, in a way, make that
16 seem less important for others in the war because
17 it would be sort of a side, you know, appendix to
18 the central commemoration that we have which is
19 in the most -- other than the Washington Monument
20 and the Lincoln Memorial -- the most prominent
21 spot we have on the Mall.

22 So, I do think that the women who

1 were these Rosies or, you know, who participated
2 in the war effort during that time are certainly
3 worth commemorating and bringing their stories,
4 you know, to the fore, but I'm not sure that a
5 separate memorial is the best way to do that
6 especially, actually, close to the World War II
7 Memorial.

8 I think that at the Vietnam Veterans
9 Memorial, the Women's Memorial looks like an
10 afterthought -- which it was, actually, and I
11 would hate to see that happen also for the
12 Rosies.

13 So, I don't actually have a strong
14 idea myself of the way that this could go. I
15 guess that, you know, for example, there have
16 been modifications of the memorials over time
17 that are in the Reserve such as most recently the
18 Korean War Veterans Memorial with the addition of
19 the names.

20 So, I gather that if it were
21 something that was either a better interpretation
22 or new panels or, I don't know, some addition,

1 some change to the World War II Memorial that's
2 existing. It wouldn't require separate
3 legislation.

4 I don't know what the facts are on
5 that, but it might also be that having it
6 separate from the World War II Memorial in a
7 different location where you wouldn't see them
8 together might also be a strong way of doing it
9 and I'm interested to hear what my fellow
10 commissioners and members think.

11 CHAIR STIDHAM: Commissioner Imamura,
12 apologies.

13 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair.

15 I would agree with Commissioner
16 Batcheler. This is difficult, but she brings up
17 a great point, I think.

18 And if this does become sort of an
19 adjunct memorial, right, does that lessen the
20 significance of it?

21 I think perhaps maybe it's reframing
22 what the potential could be in retelling the

1 story elsewhere in D.C. and its environs, right?

2 It's really expanding that story in
3 another part of the city and that has a lot of
4 potential, I think.

5 So, while that may not be the news
6 that, you know, Ms. Kenney and the sponsor want
7 to hear, but I think if you, again, sort of
8 reframe that as an extension telling the story to
9 a broader audience, you know, elsewhere in
10 another part where it might make just as much
11 sense, I think it could be as equally impactful.

12 So, I would agree.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: And just to answer
14 Commissioner Batcheler's question about additions
15 to World War II requiring legislation, it would
16 require legislation to modify, to add something
17 beyond what is already there.

18 Commissioner Maloney.

19 MR. MCGRAW: Well, thank you.

20 I also agree with the comments from
21 Mr. Imamura and Ms. Batcheler. And also thank
22 you, Mr. Fountain, for pointing out that there

1 are these existing panels on the World War II
2 Memorial.

3 I think that does make a difference
4 because there already is some amount of
5 information.

6 And to put in close proximity to that
7 a similar memorial that gives a similar sort of
8 level of general information does seem a bit
9 ineffective in a way. It would seem to me to be
10 somewhat ineffective.

11 In contrast, it seems to me that
12 especially with the possibility of a new women's
13 museum, there is a great opportunity to tell the
14 stories that were the central part of the
15 testimony this morning.

16 It is these wonderful stories that
17 are so important and not just sort of references
18 in, you know, engraved in stone.

19 And to convey those stories and the
20 variety of those stories and to use media and
21 film and, you know, all kinds of things that
22 would really convey the importance of this era to

1 people who didn't live through it, I think you
2 need the setting of a museum.

3 You need the ability to do things
4 like temporary exhibits and special exhibits and
5 that, to me, is really the way to keep this story
6 alive for future generations.

7 So, I agree that I think that, yes,
8 it's a wonderful thing. It does need to be
9 commemorated in some important way here in
10 Washington.

11 And I think, you know, letting this
12 idea evolve and percolate a little bit longer, I
13 think, may be helpful.

14 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

15 Commissioner Tunstall Williams.

16 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: Yes.

17 I would like to align myself with Commissioner
18 Maloney's comments.

19 I was thinking the same thing that,
20 you know, we also -- this commission has before
21 it talk about the Women's Museum today, and I
22 think Ms. Kenney would be wise to partner with

1 that commission to see if there's a way to tell
2 the story.

3 And also just to commend her, it was
4 an excellent presentation. I think it's a very
5 worthwhile narrative and I think that reframing
6 it in the scope of a museum might actually give
7 it more impact.

8 So, I align myself with all the other
9 commissioners' thoughtful comments, but really do
10 encourage Ms. Kenney to work with the Women's
11 Museum to further the story.

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.
13 Thank you all for those very thoughtful comments.

14 Is there any more discussion?

15 Okay. With that, we will move on.

16 So, just to let you know where we are, we still
17 have two pieces of legislation, the extension of
18 the authorization of the EMS Memorial and Second
19 Division.

20 But we also have site selection for
21 Women's Suffrage, who have a participant that
22 will need to leave us.

1 So, we're going to move the site
2 selection up and then we'll get to the last two
3 pieces of legislation -- oh, I'm sorry. Three
4 pieces of legislation; the two I mentioned plus
5 the Garden of Heroes. Sorry I missed that one.

6 So, we'll do the site selection next.
7 And with that, Mr. Fox, if you could bring up
8 Anna Laymon and Dr. Shogan? How are you?

9 MS. LAYMON: Hi. Good afternoon.

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: Other than Dr. Shogan,
11 do you need anyone else?

12 MS. LAYMON: Claire Sale from AECOM.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Okay. With
14 that, do you want to introduce yourself and then
15 get us started?

16 MS. LAYMON: Yeah. I will jump right
17 in. So, thank you all so much for having us here
18 today. Our first speaker is actually going to be
19 Dr. Shogan, there we go, who is here.

20 So, I'm going to let her kick us off
21 and then we'll dive into it. Thank you.

22 MS. SHOGAN: Thanks so much, Anna.

1 My name is Colleen Shogan. I'm the
2 newly-appointed board chair for the Women's
3 Suffrage National Monument Foundation.

4 I'm proud to have recently served as
5 the eleventh archivist of the United States, and
6 I was honored to bear the distinction of being
7 the first woman in history to hold that position.

8 I'm here today to thank you for all
9 of your support to bring the first monument
10 dedicated to women's history in the Reserve.

11 We were deeply honored to become the
12 first commemorative work in history to be
13 recommended by the National Capital Memorial
14 Advisory Commission for inclusion in the National
15 Mall.

16 During my tenure as archivist of the
17 United States, I oversaw the effort to
18 permanently add the 19th Amendment to the
19 Charters of Freedom display in the rotunda of the
20 National Archives Building along with the
21 Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and
22 the Bill of Rights.

1 The inclusion of the 19th Amendment
2 alongside our nation's other founding documents
3 is an important symbol of the 19th Amendment's
4 significance to the story of democracy in
5 America.

6 Today, you will hear from our
7 President and CEO Anna Laymon and Associate
8 Principal Claire Sale from the site selection
9 firm AECOM.

10 They will share with you the work
11 that we have done to find a site for this
12 monument that is most fitting for the monument
13 program, most thematically connected, and most
14 additive to the National Mall.

15 With every new monument established,
16 the fabric of our city is changed and we are
17 honored by the magnitude of the responsibility we
18 all share.

19 I was in the Oval Office in December
20 of 2020 when President Trump signed the
21 legislation that authorized this monument to be
22 built, and I can tell you this conversation today

1 in May of 2025 has been five years in the making.

2 Thank you very much for your
3 stewardship of our great city. Anna, I will hand
4 it over to you for the presentation. Thank you.

5 MS. LAYMON: Thank you, Dr. Shogan.

6 All right. I'm going to dive in. I
7 get to do the good stuff at the top, the history
8 and all that fun stuff.

9 And then Claire gets to walk you
10 through all the meat of the site selection that
11 we have been up to over the last few months.

12 So, the first thing that I just
13 wanted to say especially, you know, after
14 listening for the last couple of hours, Dr.
15 Shogan mentioned this, but we remain so grateful
16 to you all for your support over the last few
17 years.

18 It is no small thing that you all
19 recommended that this monument be fitting for an
20 exemption to the Reserve.

21 And I'm sure I said this to you all
22 last time when we met, but we know that the bar

1 for what should go onto the National Mall,
2 anything new, should be so high that it is almost
3 impossible to reach.

4 And the fact that you all and
5 Congress and President Trump and President Biden
6 and the first ladies have all recognized and
7 acknowledged that this is one of those projects
8 that reaches that bar, right, as I think,
9 Commissioner Fountain, you have mentioned this,
10 that bar that's a little bit hard to tell exactly
11 where it is, right?

12 But the fact that you all recognized
13 that this is one of those projects that reached
14 that bar is deeply meaningful to us and it meant
15 a lot in Congress. Your recommendation actually
16 meant everything. So, thank you.

17 So, let me dive in. Can we head to -
18 - keep going through the slides. Can whoever is
19 controlling this -- Laurel, maybe -- take us a
20 couple slides in?

21 Perfect. Thank you. Okay. So, just
22 by way of background, you know, you all are very

1 familiar with this because we have been here to
2 this commission before, but the path to this
3 monument's creation was bipartisan, it was
4 bicameral, and it was national

5 And we feel very lucky to have spent
6 the last few years in that process and very
7 grateful to everyone who helped us work through
8 the different layers that are required to build a
9 monument in Washington, D.C., and specifically in
10 the Reserve.

11 So, as you all know -- we can go to
12 the next slide, Laurel. As you all know, the
13 legislation to authorize this memorial was passed
14 in 2020 tying to the hundred-year anniversary of
15 the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

16 Five years later, a second piece of
17 legislation passed authorizing the memorial to be
18 built in the Reserve.

19 Now, we are back here with you today
20 to figure out where within the Reserve is the
21 best possible site for the monument that is the
22 most additive to the National Mall and it does

1 the most justice to the subject matter that we're
2 here to commemorate.

3 We can head to the next slide,
4 please. so, in consultation with our council of
5 advisors which is made up of, you know, the
6 leading suffrage historians and art historians
7 and folks who do this work day in and day out in
8 our nation's capital, we have put together a list
9 of five goals for the monument.

10 So, our goal is to build a monument
11 on the National Mall that weaves the great women
12 of American history in amongst the giants of our
13 founding story; that ensures that every girl and
14 woman who visits the National Mall sees herself
15 represented in the commemorative fabric of the
16 most visited national park in the United States;
17 to ignite curiosity in American women's history;
18 to foster a deeper understanding of the women who
19 shaped American democracy; and inspire future
20 generations and the continued pursuit of liberty
21 and equality.

22 Next slide, please. So, a little bit

1 on the history. I will not spend much time on
2 this because I know you all are familiar with it,
3 but I think a little bit of background is always
4 helpful in these conversations.

5 So, you know, you all are more
6 familiar than anyone, right? Monuments are not
7 just meant to be pretty pieces of public art,
8 right? They are much deeper, much more
9 meaningful than that.

10 National monuments help us reflect
11 our history and shape how we see ourselves as a
12 nation.

13 We have taken that to heart and our
14 goal has been to find sites that would allow the
15 surroundings of the monument to help us tell the
16 monument's story.

17 And so, as we dig into the history --
18 if we could head to the next slide, please -- so
19 the history represented in this monument spans,
20 some might say, 75 years, I might even say
21 hundreds of years from the Colonial days of our
22 country all the way to the Progressive Era.

1 Women's suffrage has seeds in the
2 early Republic. We've already heard a little bit
3 about Abigail Adams today.

4 I thought that the way that the
5 Congressman -- I wrote it down. The way that he
6 described Abigail Adams as very influential and
7 John Adams' unofficial chief of staff, I thought,
8 well, what a better -- there could be no better
9 description of every woman throughout history,
10 right, the unofficial woman there doing the work
11 who is waiting for her recognition, but the
12 women's suffrage movement has that same story,
13 right?

14 The seeds of the women's suffrage
15 movement start all the way back to Abigail Adams
16 when she wrote in a letter to her husband in
17 1776, remember the ladies in the new code of laws
18 which I suppose it will be necessary for you to
19 make.

20 And then my favorite part as she goes
21 on to say in this letter, if you don't, we will
22 be forced to foment a rebellion.

1 Which is something I would like on a
2 shirt or a hat, I don't know, but "fomenting a
3 rebellion" is the greatest phrase maybe in
4 history.

5 So, as we continue through the Early
6 Republic -- if we could go to the next slide? As
7 we continue through the Early Republic in the
8 19th century, women organized around this central
9 question: Hadn't the Revolutionary War been
10 fought just 70 years earlier to win the right to
11 self-governance for every American? Shouldn't it
12 be that in this new and great nation one truth
13 should be self-evident that all men and women are
14 created equal?

15 It was that thought, that sentiment,
16 that led to the drafting of the Declaration of
17 Sentiments, which was a document mirrored on the
18 Declaration of Independence where women sat down
19 together -- women and men in 1848 and wrote on
20 paper for the first time, we hold these truths to
21 be self-evident that all men and women are
22 created equal.

1 We'll go into the next slide. That
2 kicked off the organized movement for women's
3 equality and women's suffrage, which leads us
4 into the fight for the 19th Amendment.

5 As you all know, the suffrage has set
6 precedents in protest, civic organization and
7 civil disobedience, that have continued to
8 inspire generations of activists in the pursuit
9 of full equality for all.

10 In the long fight for voting rights
11 equality, the suffrage movement stands as a
12 critical victory.

13 The ratification of the 19th
14 Amendment marks the single largest expansion of
15 voting rights in American history culminating in
16 a massive extension of democracy, individual
17 rights and justice.

18 So, the task ahead with all of that
19 in mind, is to make visible the role of our
20 foremothers in building, securing and expanding
21 our democracy, to celebrate the suffrage's
22 patriotism and resilience, and inspire a

1 continued investment in America's constitutional
2 promise of freedom, justice and equality for all.

3 Together our goal is to build a
4 tribute to the women and men who, in the words of
5 suffragist Mary McLeod Bethune, fought for
6 America with all her imperfections not so much
7 for what she is, but for what we know she can be.

8 Next slide, please. All right.
9 We're out of the history. Into the meat. Okay.
10 So, as we get into our themes, I wanted to
11 mention the suffragists understood the collective
12 power of democracy, but collective action in work
13 is much more meaningful and that that's what
14 makes a democracy special.

15 We aim to take those lessons and
16 apply them here. We are so lucky to have so many
17 partners, many of whom I think are here watching
18 today, excited to see where this leads.

19 Those partners include organizations
20 like Daughters of the American Revolution, Delta
21 Sigma Theta, Junior League, right, women who are
22 in action today working to make their communities

1 better and it's really an honor to get to
2 continue that work today to do that collective
3 work, that democracy in action.

4 So, as we head into our themes -- can
5 we go to the next slide, please. Okay. So, you
6 all are very, very familiar with this, but the
7 National Mall, right, has places to reflect on
8 the legacy of past presidents, honor the
9 sacrifices made in war, but this monument brings
10 a different type of experience, a different type
11 of monument than perhaps we already have on the
12 National Mall.

13 This will be a monument that will
14 celebrate the contributions that women have made
15 to American democracy.

16 So, the themes we have established
17 are as follows: Weaving the great women of
18 American history in amongst the giants of our
19 national story, the Women's Suffrage National
20 Monument will enhance the National Mall by
21 standing shoulder to shoulder with the other
22 renowned commemorative works there; inspire

1 visitors to revere the role women played
2 throughout American history in building, shaping
3 and expanding our democracy; celebrate the role
4 of our foremothers in building a more just and
5 equal America; tell a diverse and broad story of
6 the fight for the 19th Amendment; and encourage a
7 continued investment in America's constitutional
8 promise of freedom, justice and equality for all.

9 We've identified several factors that
10 would facilitate a program like this such as a
11 safe place for families to visit so that every
12 mother, right, who comes there with her children
13 is able to engage in the monument, enjoy the
14 monument and not worry, right, about traffic from
15 this side or this side, right?

16 We want a place that can accommodate
17 events and gatherings. We want a place that can
18 accommodate for true place-making and allow for
19 visitors to interact with the monument. The
20 program is ambitious, but worthy of the monument
21 that we seek to build.

22 So, with that, I'm going to hand it

1 over to Claire so that she can dive into our site
2 selection criteria.

3 MS. SALE: Hello. On to the next
4 slide. So, I'm going to review the site
5 selection criteria.

6 So, you can see here we evaluated
7 sites based on a variety of criteria. The first
8 is the program suitability that Anna had
9 referenced earlier.

10 We talk about the integration into
11 the Monumental Core and the idea that it should
12 be part of the commemorative landscape as well as
13 the site should have a thematic nexus. Anna had
14 talked about the themes of the monument. So,
15 leaning into that.

16 We also want to talk about the
17 addition to Washington's commemorative landscape
18 and the idea of broadening the storytelling
19 associated with that.

20 We looked at the need for
21 implementation coordination with our other
22 organizations that should be involved,

1 infrastructure, where there is infrastructure
2 that needs to be accounted for.

3 We looked at safety and security, as
4 Anna mentioned, both in terms of perceived safety
5 as well as other types of safety like traffic
6 concerns.

7 Site access, can people access and be
8 available at the site?

9 We looked at accessibility and
10 proximity to transit as well as support
11 facilities.

12 So, are there locations nearby that
13 can offer those services such to support events
14 and the visitor experience in the other programs
15 that Anna mentioned earlier.

16 Next slide, please. And this is a
17 longer explanation of the criteria. So, we can
18 fast-forward through this slide and the next
19 slide, please.

20 So, then we looked at site selection.
21 So, we overlaid the criteria onto a universe of
22 sites and, generally speaking, as a broad brush,

1 we did not look at sites east of 14th Street with
2 the idea being that that is not part of the
3 commemorative focus of the National Mall, but is
4 more focused on museums.

5 So, as a result, we looked at a
6 number of sites and we also looked at sites only
7 in the Reserve based on the authorizing
8 legislation that notes that the commemorative
9 work shall be located in the Reserve.

10 Next slide. So, based on this
11 variety of sites we evaluated the criteria. We
12 advanced eight for further consideration.

13 There were several that fell off
14 during this portion of the evaluation process.
15 Those included -- one of the chief things we
16 looked at was program suitability, thematic
17 nexus, site access.

18 And so for Lafayette Square, which
19 has a thematic connection to the site, but it
20 doesn't really fit the program requirements and
21 is frequently closed off to visitors.

22 We also looked at the Rugby Fields

1 with the idea being that it is an open space that
2 could be transformative, but it also is close to
3 a busy roadway of 15th Street, it's a little
4 further removed from the commemorative core and
5 also has some conflicts in terms of recreation
6 fields.

7 So, based on that, on the next slide
8 it shows the eight sites we advanced for further
9 consideration based on the criteria.

10 As part of this, we looked at Ohio
11 Drive, Tidal Basin East, Tidal Basin West and the
12 Hockey Fields West.

13 So, the Tidal Basin sites we
14 dismissed from further consideration based on
15 their relative size, their concerns about
16 flooding, infrastructure, and their placement in
17 a location that really celebrates individual
18 accomplishments and leadership. So, we didn't
19 think that this was necessarily the best fit.

20 Ohio Drive is a little further away
21 from the Memorial Core and didn't really have
22 that -- bring that thematic nexus that we would

1 have liked.

2 Similarly, Hockey Fields West is a
3 little further afield from Hockey Fields East,
4 which we will go into in a little deeper dive
5 here in a sec. It has a more recreation focus
6 and doesn't have quite the thematic links.

7 On our next slide, you can see the
8 top four sites that we advanced for
9 consideration. Those include Constitution
10 Gardens West, Constitution Gardens East, the
11 Hockey Fields East and Washington Monument South.

12 Okay. On the next slide there are
13 site studies. So, here you can see the various
14 locations of the proposed commemorative work
15 sites as they are laid out on this aerial
16 photograph, or bird's eye view photograph, of the
17 National Mall.

18 Next slide, please. So, here is --
19 the first site we looked at was Washington
20 Monument South.

21 This represents a location that has
22 all open turf, fields, that's located southwest

1 of the Washington Monument and its principal
2 feature is the Washington Monument itself and the
3 connection to it.

4 Next slide, please. So, Washington
5 Monument South incorporates women into the story
6 of the country's founding if you think about the
7 Washington Monument not celebrating General
8 Washington alone, but as the founding of the
9 country.

10 So, it also locates the commemorative
11 work adjacent to gathering and open recreation
12 space that are part of the Washington Monument
13 grounds, it provides access to the Sylvan Theater
14 to the east for that additional programming
15 support, and it connects nearby transit through
16 the Smithsonian metro rail station.

17 Next slide, please. Here you can see
18 multiple images of the Washington Monument. We
19 have the view looking west towards the World War
20 II Memorial, the view looking south towards the
21 Survey Lodge and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial,
22 and then two images looking towards the

1 Washington Monument; one on an average spring day
2 and another one where an event is taking place.

3 In this case, the Kite Festival.

4 Next slide. So, here we show the
5 thematic context for the commemorative work site.
6 So, here we have the blue star representing the
7 proposed location for consideration and there are
8 clear connections to the Washington Monument, to
9 the National Museum of African American History
10 and Culture, as well as to the White House and
11 the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

12 I would note that the White House to
13 Thomas Jefferson Memorial is a 150-foot wide view
14 corridor that is to remain open.

15 There's also a not visual connection,
16 but general location context connection to the
17 Smithsonian Museum of American History.

18 Next slide, please. So, as part of
19 the Trust for the National Mall's efforts to
20 improve the National Mall, they are proposing to
21 improve the Sylvan Theater and the location noted
22 in red is essentially the proposed boundaries of

1 that effort.

2 Next slide, please. So, here we have
3 our site analysis. So, we looked at the site to
4 figure out sort of what are the important things
5 that we should consider as part of the analysis
6 of the site for location of the Women's Suffrage
7 National Monument.

8 And so, we looked at the proposed
9 Sylvan Theater area. So, we moved it out west
10 outside of that area.

11 Then we also wanted to keep it
12 outside of that 150-foot view corridor. So, we
13 moved it further west again.

14 As a result, we have located it just
15 north of the Survey Lodge in an approximately
16 two-acre site as a sort of general boundary --
17 or, excuse me, 1.8 acres.

18 We've also identified a 1/2-acre site
19 that could really serve as the memorial focus
20 area and setting of the memorial.

21 And if we think about the area to the
22 west of the memorial, so that's essentially

1 following that arrow to the left, is the World
2 War II Memorial and this site feels a little open
3 in that area.

4 So, on the next slide we took a look
5 at a potential design approach. And the intent
6 here is not to design the monument, but instead
7 to give a general idea of how it could function.

8 So, in this case we have looked at
9 this 1.8-acre site and identified a focal area.
10 This would be north of the Survey Lodge with the
11 intent facing to the northeast towards the
12 Washington Monument and the National Museum of
13 African American History and Culture.

14 The idea here being that those are
15 the strongest thematic connections to the
16 monument itself. And then we also have a setting
17 as well as a buffer.

18 Again, it feels a little exposed to
19 that western area and we wanted to provide a
20 buffer to that and to the Survey Lodge to the
21 south which contains National Park Service
22 operations.

1 Next slide, please. So, moving on,
2 we looked at the Hockey Fields West site. So,
3 this is an area that is north of Ash Woods and
4 south of the Reflecting Pool. It's a largely
5 turf field.

6 On the next slide we have some
7 photos. And so, this provides clear visibility
8 to the Washington Monument. It connects to the
9 D.C. War Memorial which commemorates events that
10 played a significant role in advancing Women's
11 Suffrage Movement and offers an open and
12 expansive area for program.

13 Next slide, please. So, here you can
14 see the views to the Washington Monument from the
15 site. It also serves as a recreation space. So,
16 that's one thing to keep in mind.

17 And then views to the west include
18 the D.C. War Memorial, as mentioned previously,
19 but also includes the United States Park Police
20 Horse Stables.

21 Next slide, please. So, here we have
22 the thematic context. The primary links that are

1 visible include the Washington Monument and the
2 D.C. War Memorial.

3 There are other connections that are
4 less visible, but are within the context of the
5 National Mall and that includes the 56 Signers of
6 the Declaration of Independence Memorial and the
7 Vietnam Women's Memorial.

8 We would also note that the D.C. War
9 Memorial is on the 19th Street access, but
10 doesn't really feel like that. You wouldn't know
11 that unless you were told that specifically at
12 this location.

13 Next slide, please. So, we looked at
14 this as a site on the hockey fields as a whole,
15 but we wanted to pick a location that wasn't in
16 the middle and kind of picked a side,
17 essentially, to allow for continued recreation
18 functions elsewhere within the site.

19 In this case, we chose the eastern
20 most portion of the site. We looked at an
21 approximately two-acre site with a half-acre
22 focus area, and we were also trying to balance

1 the location between the two comfort stations
2 that are there currently.

3 Next slide, please. So, here we have
4 the design approach. In this case, yet again, we
5 are focusing on access to the Washington Monument
6 that could also include the D.C. War Memorial.

7 We have included the setting to help
8 provide a memorial experience and then a buffer
9 that is part of that two-acre site.

10 And that would include a little
11 distance from the comfort stations. We like the
12 idea of them being there, but we don't want them
13 right on top of the proposed monument.

14 In this case, we've also illustrated
15 the existing Ash Woods comfort station being
16 moved further west as part of the National Park
17 Service's proposed National Mall Comfort Station
18 Plan and would be located west of the U.S. Park
19 Police Stables.

20 Next slide, please. So, now we're
21 going to look at Constitution Gardens.

22 Constitution Gardens is an area that features

1 gentle slopes, open meadows, informal tree
2 massings, meandering paths, and is in contrast to
3 the very formal landscape of the Lincoln Memorial
4 grounds to the south.

5 Next slide, please. So, as a bit of
6 historical background here, the Constitution
7 Gardens was originally established as part of the
8 Bicentennial celebration and was identified and
9 called Bicentennial Gardens.

10 In 1984, the memorial to the 56
11 Signers of the Declaration of Independence was
12 unveiled in Bicentennial Gardens.

13 And in 1986 on the 200-year
14 anniversary of the signing of the U.S.
15 Constitution, President Reagan issued a
16 proclamation renaming Bicentennial Gardens to
17 Constitution Gardens, proclaiming the space to be
18 a living legacy tribute to the Constitution and
19 the founding of the Republic.

20 Next slide, please. So, here we're
21 looking at two sites within Constitution Gardens;
22 Constitution Gardens West and Constitution

1 Gardens East.

2 Next slide, please. So, here the
3 Trust for the National Mall has proposed and
4 received approval for its Gardens Lake Project
5 and essentially it would improve Constitution
6 Gardens, the lake, the area around the lake and
7 include an event plaza, an event lawn, a deck and
8 essentially a way for people to access the water
9 through a lake ring, but leaves a fair amount of
10 open space to the western portion of the site.

11 Next slide, please. There's also
12 other ongoing proposals as part of -- in
13 Constitution Gardens.

14 One is, as I mentioned previously,
15 the National Mall Comfort Station Plan. And this
16 would also include a relocated comfort station in
17 Constitution Gardens.

18 And then as part of the event plaza
19 at the Gardens Lake Project that I just
20 mentioned, there would also be an event plaza all
21 on the east side of the site.

22 Next slide, please. So, Constitution

1 Gardens East. This is a place that links Women's
2 Suffrage National Monument to the U.S.
3 Constitution by locating it in Constitution
4 Gardens.

5 It highlights historical connection
6 between the Declaration of Sentiments, the
7 founding document of the Women's Suffrage
8 Movement that was modeled after the Declaration
9 of Independence, through proximity to the 56
10 Signers of the Declaration of Independence
11 Memorial.

12 It situates the memorial dedicated to
13 the 19th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in
14 Constitution Gardens as well as close to the 19th
15 Street.

16 It provides a waterfront setting and
17 offers landscape to accommodate a monument
18 program and then the Trust for the National Mall
19 plans to replace the plaza with a pavilion in the
20 next phase of its improvements.

21 Next slide, please. Here are a
22 couple photos of the sites. You have looking

1 east towards the plaza as well as looking
2 southeast from the plaza towards the Washington
3 Monument -- or, excuse me -- and looking west
4 from the plaza towards Constitution Garden Lakes.
5 Apologies.

6 Next slide, please. So, here we have
7 the context. There are multiple physical links,
8 as mentioned; the Washington Monument, 56 Signers
9 Memorial and the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

10 There are also other locations that
11 are within the physical context that aren't
12 visible, and that includes the American Red
13 Cross, the Daughters of the American Revolution
14 and the White House. We also note the Vietnam
15 Veterans Memorial-Washington Monument View
16 Corridor.

17 Next slide, please. So, here we have
18 site analysis for an approximately two-acre site
19 at the eastern portion of Constitution Gardens.

20 This would encompass the plaza, the
21 stairs and the area around it. It would be
22 beyond the levee. So, it would not affect that

1 portion of the site.

2 Next slide, please. So, here you can
3 see the design approach that we've taken with a
4 focal area at the event plaza.

5 The intent here is that the site is
6 elevated on basically from the east and west.
7 So, that would provide a prominent location.

8 The setting would lead towards the
9 lake, the lake improvements, and the area would
10 be connected by a buffer to this, and this would
11 still offer those visual connections that we just
12 talked about in the thematic context.

13 Next slide, please. So, here you can
14 see how the proposed design approach is overlaid
15 on top of the Constitution Gardens Lake Project.

16 So, where the event plaza would be we
17 have overlaid the focal area and the setting for
18 the monument.

19 It would also provide a link to the
20 lake ring and that area of interest on the
21 eastern side of the park.

22 Next slide, please. So, then we

1 looked at Constitution West. Constitution West
2 has a lot of the same characteristics as
3 Constitution Gardens East.

4 In this case, though, we would like
5 to note that it is a little closer to 19th Street
6 and the associated 19th Amendment.

7 So, next slide, please. So, here you
8 can see that connection at 19th and Constitution.
9 Seems to be a really significant location.

10 And here we have views towards the
11 east towards the Washington Monument and then
12 looking northeast from the western portion,
13 western path of the site towards that 19th and
14 Constitution intersection.

15 Next slide, please. So, again we
16 have very similar context to the Constitution
17 Gardens East location. Again, I don't have a lot
18 more to add to this except, again, the 19th
19 Street access there.

20 Next slide, please. Here in site
21 analysis we've taken a slightly different
22 approach. The other locations were a singular

1 blob and this one is a little more dispersed.

2 And that reflects the character of the
3 Constitution Gardens itself, the western portion
4 of it.

5 So, in this case, we have aims to not
6 infringe upon the 56 Signers of the Declaration
7 of Independence. So, we have limited the eastern
8 scope of the northern portion of the site and
9 we've identified instead three memorial nodes of
10 activity for the site as opposed to a single
11 location. And, again, this reflects the
12 landscape of the area.

13 Next slide, please. So, here we have
14 a design approach that we anticipate visitors
15 approaching from the 19th and Constitution
16 location. They can enter and move around to a
17 sequential memorial experience along the lake.

18 We also have noted the proposed
19 comfort station relocation. There's a current
20 kiosk there in the southwest portion of the site
21 and that would be incorporated as part of that
22 comfort station.

1 So, here we've -- the intent is,
2 again, to provide an experience for people to
3 come to the monument along this landscaped area.

4 Next slide, please. And here we have
5 a conceptual overlay. The Constitution Gardens
6 Lakes Plan had a lot of activity to the east and
7 less activity to the west.

8 And so, as part of this we have
9 included and overlaid this commemorative
10 landscape idea on top of that so that there would
11 be a series of activating points on the western
12 portion of the park.

13 Next slide, please. And, in
14 conclusion, we would note that we looked at four
15 different sites, as we just mentioned.

16 And, on the next slide, here are the
17 four different design approaches in comparison.
18 The Constitution West location, which is more a
19 series of nodes, as opposed to the Constitution
20 Gardens East, Hockey Fields East and Washington
21 Monument South, which tend to be more singular
22 locations.

1 Next slide, please. So, we looked at
2 what the comparative pluses and minuses of the
3 sites are.

4 Constitution Gardens West has some
5 very strong thematic connections to a variety of
6 memorials and links.

7 It also provides an opportunity to
8 align with strategic fund-raising initiatives by
9 the Trust for the National Mall.

10 The National Women's Suffrage
11 Monument Foundation has worked with the Trust for
12 the National Mall to understand and work with
13 them to come up with a design and approach that
14 could be accommodated.

15 We also have reinforced the
16 significance of the 19th Amendment due to
17 proximity to 19th Street and Constitution in an
18 uninterrupted landscape.

19 It will, however, require
20 coordination between the kiosk relocation,
21 Constitution Gardens rehabilitation and memorial
22 development timelines.

1 Constitution Gardens East has a lot
2 of similar opportunities with a slightly
3 different thematic nexus, but overlaps with the
4 approved event plaza from the Garden Lakes
5 Project.

6 And it also limits commemorative site
7 development due to intended future use events and
8 temporary structures.

9 Hockey fields offers flexibility in
10 planning and expansive views of the Washington
11 Monument and D.C. War Memorial, but it does have
12 a conflict with the current recreation use,
13 including the fee permits that generate revenue
14 for the park, and it creates a separation from
15 the real monument Memorial Core area.

16 And then Washington Monument South
17 has strong connections to a highly visible
18 location, but it has limited treatments due to
19 the constraints around it.

20 And then it diminishes the character
21 and essence of the new commemorative work due to
22 the Washington Monument, which features a

1 classically masculine object.

2 So, based on this information -- next
3 slide, please -- we recommend that the National
4 Women's Suffrage Monument be located at
5 Constitution Gardens West.

6 The idea is that it would weave the
7 thematic connections into the -- and
8 contextualize the story of women's contributions
9 to American democracy.

10 It would best fit the program and
11 best integrate into the commemorative landscape
12 in Washington and National Mall.

13 And with that, I will turn it over to
14 Anna, please.

15 MS. LAYMON: All right. I get to wrap
16 this up. So, we wanted to just share a few
17 things with you here towards the end.

18 Claire mentioned, of course, the
19 Trust for the National Mall has ongoing work that
20 they are doing that is really extraordinary and
21 really important to reactivating the Constitution
22 Gardens space.

1 We have met with their team several
2 times to talk about how the work that we're
3 trying to do with the Women's Suffrage National
4 Monument might combine with and, you know, get us
5 to the point where together we are uplifting each
6 other's work in that Constitution Gardens space.

7 Next slide, please. And so, I wanted
8 to just point out and share with you -- this was
9 in your packet -- but the letter of support that
10 we received from the Trust for the National Mall
11 where we have really worked together to figure
12 out where within Constitution Gardens would this
13 monument be most additive when thinking about the
14 work that they are doing to revitalize that
15 greenspace, to revitalize the lake life, to
16 revitalize the wildlife, right.

17 All of this work that they're doing
18 is extremely important and how might this
19 monument add to that work.

20 And so, as you can see, right, as
21 we've worked with the Trust for the National
22 Mall, it's become very clear that that western

1 end of Constitution Gardens could really benefit
2 from something coming in and really helping to
3 activate it, and we both agree that this monument
4 would be the perfect thing to do that.

5 And so, wanted to share that with you
6 all and wanted to thank the Trust for their
7 collaboration for the last several months, even
8 maybe several years, as we've gotten to this
9 point.

10 And so, you know, I think it's really
11 -- what is that saying? It's that "the whole is
12 greater than the sum of its part" idea that I
13 think is really, really true here, and the
14 opportunity to work together seems really like
15 there's a lot of good that we can do here in this
16 section of the National Mall.

17 If we could head to the next slide,
18 please? Another key piece of the collaboration
19 as we've looked to figure out where this monument
20 would really, really best fit on the National
21 Mall has been our work with Congress.

22 Next slide, please. Over the last

1 couple of years, Congress not only debated if
2 this monument should be located on the National
3 Mall, but they spent a lot of time thinking about
4 where on the National Mall does a monument to the
5 19th Amendment belong. The resounding answer
6 that kept coming back was Constitution Gardens.

7 Next slide, please. Bipartisan
8 leaders from the House, Natural Resources
9 Committee, the legislative -- which is, as you
10 all know, right, the legislative committee that
11 oversees federal lands -- highlighted the great
12 opportunity to broaden our historical narrative
13 and really rejuvenate this part of the National
14 Mall by adding the Women's Suffrage National
15 Monument to Constitution Gardens.

16 Next slide, please. Bill sponsors
17 from both the House and the Senate really
18 coalesced around the idea of placing the monument
19 in Constitution Gardens to ensure that we were
20 telling a deeper and richer story on the National
21 Mall.

22 Next slide, please. They spoke to

1 the importance of giving space so that every
2 young girl who visits our nation's capital can
3 see women's history reflected in our country's
4 monuments and memorials.

5 Next slide. And they spoke of the
6 need for every child, every adult, to see
7 themselves reflected in our nation's capital so
8 that they know they belong in the halls of
9 government, that their stories belong in our
10 nation's history, and that they belong on the
11 National Mall.

12 Next slide, please. And, lastly,
13 they spoke of their desire to see this space that
14 was dedicated during the nation's bicentennial as
15 a living memorial to the founding of the Republic
16 to really reflect the work that women did to
17 preserve the freedoms and liberties that we have
18 here in this great nation.

19 So, last slide, please. Okay. This
20 is where I say thank you for letting us come here
21 today and share all of this with you.

22 Thank you for all of the work you

1 have done with us over these last years and I'm
2 going to leave you with a Susan B. Anthony quote.

3 So, here we go. Here's what she had
4 to say. She said, we shall someday have our
5 amendment to the Constitution of the United
6 States and everybody will think it was always so
7 just exactly as many young people think that all
8 the privileges, all the freedoms, all the
9 enjoyments which women now possess always were
10 hers.

11 They have no idea how every single
12 inch of ground that she stands upon today has
13 been gained by the hard work of some little
14 handful of women in the past.

15 And so, too -- here's where I come
16 in. Susan B. Anthony stops and I start. Okay.
17 So, too, will this monument be one day when
18 millions of visitors every year come upon it and
19 think that it has simply always been there
20 because it's so exactly as where it belongs and
21 they could have never imagined a National Mall
22 that could have been any other way.

1 Thank you very much for being a part
2 of this story, for honoring us with your support
3 when we needed it most, and for helping us gain
4 that little inch of ground that Susan B. Anthony
5 speaks of.

6 so, Tammy, I'm done. I hand it back
7 to you. Thank you.

8 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes. Thank you very
9 much, Anna.

10 Before we move into discussion,
11 questions. Do any of the commissioners have
12 questions for either Ms. Laymon or Ms. Sale?

13 Do we still have everyone?

14 Mr. Fountain.

15 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Well, I warn
16 you that my internet connection is a little
17 unstable. So, you may lose me.

18 But, Claire, if -- what is the
19 Trust's current plan for the east end of
20 Constitution Gardens that you would be affecting
21 if you proceeded there?

22 MS. SALE: So, in terms of the eastern

1 edge of Constitution Gardens, there is
2 essentially -- it might be helpful, Laurel, if
3 you could bring up that slide. And I can explain
4 it better that way if I have a visual cue to look
5 at.

6 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah.

7 MS. SALE: Okay. If we can go, I
8 think, two slides further? There we go.

9 So, on the eastern side the -- as I
10 understand it, the proposed plan, and this
11 actually may be a better question for the Chair,
12 but, as I understand it, the intent would be to
13 have an event space in that plaza area.

14 And then the area in the stairs and
15 the trees there would be improved and, like,
16 rehabilitated and replaced with the intent of --
17 yes, so that's -- that's how I understand it.

18 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: All right.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: That is correct. In
20 long term, they look for the area which on this
21 image says "focal area," it's a very flat area,
22 to serve as events, but potentially to have a

1 building of some sort, a kiosk or even a
2 restaurant was envisioned at one point for that
3 location, and then the area in front of it being
4 more like a plot, a vegetated plaza that stairs
5 up to the top.

6 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Okay. And
7 then on the flip side on the west side of the
8 lake, is there a plan other than just making it
9 nicer?

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: The other side is more
11 of a garden area on the other side with the Park
12 Service's plans for improving the existing
13 comfort station to move it from its current
14 location a little north, and to expand it from
15 just a comfort station to a food kiosk with a
16 comfort station.

17 And we have some plans for what that
18 building -- it would be into the hillside a
19 little bit. So, as you make the path around, it
20 would be sort of tucked in.

21 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Okay. Thank
22 you.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Commissioner Imamura.

2 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you,
3 Madam Chair.

4 I don't have any questions, but just
5 two remarks. One for Ms. Laymon. I just wanted
6 to acknowledge that I know you probably labored
7 over your closing remarks and you delivered it
8 very well.

9 If I weren't sitting at home, you
10 know, when you write those out, you want to write
11 it in such a way that it brings people to their
12 feet. And so, I would have risen to my feet.
13 So, thank you.

14 Now, Ms. Sale, you had mentioned
15 Constitution West was more dispersed in the
16 source configuration.

17 I would argue that instead of
18 dispersed, it's better integrated into the
19 landscape. So, I would probably use that
20 description or I would encourage you to do so
21 moving forward depending on where this commission
22 lands, but I will show some of my cards here and

1 I don't know where the rest of my commissioners
2 are, but I think of all four, I would describe
3 Hockey Field East as floating, right, kind of
4 jammed at the end; Washington South is kind of
5 pinched; Constitution East is competing, I think,
6 if there were an event there, and so I think that
7 there's a potential there with Constitution West.

8 And certainly the intersection of
9 19th Street is kind of fortuitous, but I think
10 the integration in the landscape here is key.

11 So, anyway, I'll just leave it at
12 that.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
14 Commissioner.

15 Commissioner Sullivan.

16 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yes. Thank
17 you all for the presentation. I really enjoyed
18 that and I also really appreciate the outreach
19 with the Trust. That's great.

20 Many of you already know the NCPC
21 already fully approved this, the rehabilitation
22 plan for Constitution Gardens, and really

1 supported what is all the event activity
2 happening at Constitution Gardens East.

3 And I would say that I think the
4 Constitution Gardens West site is much better
5 than the east option here because of that.

6 I did have a question about Hockey
7 Fields East. I don't know, Commissioner Stidham,
8 if this is better answered by you, but how much
9 of that part of the field is actually used for
10 recreation? Is it pretty busy?

11 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yeah. Actually, the
12 entire hockey field is pretty heavily used and
13 permitted throughout the year.

14 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. All
15 right. Thank you.

16 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

17 Commissioner Batcheler.

18 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yes, thank
19 you. And I will add my thanks for the
20 presentation and reaffirm that I -- I mean, it's
21 already gotten approval for the Reserve, but this
22 does seem to be appropriate for the Reserve.

1 I did have some questions like the
2 commission members who have spoken before me. I
3 think of the four sites that you've identified,
4 probably the best one is Con Gardens West.

5 I say that because of the programming
6 conflicts at Hockey Fields East because I think
7 Hockey Fields East might have some promise as
8 well, but I had a question about some of the
9 sites that have been eliminated in your site
10 selection process.

11 You know, these tables that we get
12 with all of the sort of consumer reports, you
13 know, circles on them, do not always give the
14 best picture of the relative value of different
15 criteria across this.

16 Once you've identified them and made
17 them like white or black or half and half, they
18 all get evenly balanced.

19 Yeah, so I'm never a big fan of
20 these. I know that they're sort of a necessary
21 process -- part of the process going through it,
22 but one of the sites -- or maybe I'll just back

1 up for one second and say that just as the 19th
2 Amendment was a transformative amendment and you
3 are aiming for transformative experience for the
4 people who are going to be here, I think that
5 there's an opportunity with this especially since
6 you are identifying it as a landscape -- sort of
7 a garden landscape type of monument to pick a
8 site where the landscape itself can also be
9 transformed.

10 So, I say that to offer some
11 observations about various sites. One, Con
12 Gardens West is being transformed already. I
13 mean, I think that it's, you know, it's certainly
14 a workable site. I think, like I said, of the
15 ones that you've identified, it's the strongest.

16 It is a little bit crowded with other
17 commemorative works there. So, sort of standing
18 out as a different memorial might be more
19 difficult there.

20 Hockey Fields East you could
21 transform the landscape more, but then you're
22 stuck behind the comfort station for the World

1 War II Memorial, which I don't think is a place
2 you want to be.

3 One site that dropped off the list is
4 the 14th and Independence site and maybe we could
5 go to the larger site plan.

6 Well, here, yeah, okay, so it didn't,
7 you know, it didn't -- all the circles aren't the
8 right color, but the -- but one thing about this
9 site is that it is extremely prominent on the
10 Mall.

11 It's at a fulcrum point between the
12 formal eastern part of the Mall, the Washington
13 Monument and the less formal western part of the
14 Mall.

15 It's close to the access between the
16 White House and, you know, the east-west access
17 and the north-south access.

18 I know it has been under
19 consideration for a museum from the Smithsonian.
20 This was one of the sites that I think they were
21 considering for the Women's Museum and the
22 American Latino Museum; however, it's really not

1 big enough for a museum.

2 And it could provide the opportunity
3 to really have -- because it's not part of the
4 ALM panels, it could provide the opportunity to
5 really have a transformative landscape here.

6 So, I would encourage you to add that
7 back if the difficulties that you've identified
8 in that matrix are not insurmountable. And I
9 really can't -- I don't know how to evaluate the
10 different circles.

11 So, do you have any thoughts about
12 that?

13 MS. LAYMON: Yes. Claire, do you want
14 to start and I can add in?

15 MS. SALE: I think --

16 MS. LAYMON: Sorry, go ahead, Claire.

17 MS. SALE: I think that part of the
18 thought was -- so, you note that it's at an
19 extremely prominent site, but it's also kind of
20 at the edge of some of that commemorative
21 experience.

22 And so, we wanted to be more

1 integrated as part of the commemorative
2 experience.

3 And it's also close to some busy
4 roads and that was also a consideration. And I
5 will turn it over to Anna if she has anything to
6 add.

7 MS. LAYMON: Yeah, I would add to
8 that.

9 That was a really interesting site to
10 us, Commissioner. We looked at that one very
11 carefully because it does offer that opportunity
12 for space-making that we're so interested in and
13 place-making and I think it is a really
14 interesting site.

15 Our biggest concern with that -- and
16 I agree this -- we call this the "stoplight
17 graph." Lovingly, we call this the "stoplight
18 graph," you know.

19 Part of the formula of these
20 presentations is baked. And so, we follow that
21 formula as required, but it is an interesting way
22 to try to rank and stack.

1 One thing that this graph, I think,
2 doesn't capture is that not every column is
3 weighted equally in how we're considering where
4 we think this monument is best placed.

5 So, our biggest concern with that
6 site that is beyond and outside of our ability to
7 fix and control -- when we were first beginning
8 this process, we actually went to that site.

9 This was when Peter May was still the
10 chair of the Commission and he shared with us
11 that that intersection is the most dangerous
12 intersection in Washington, D.C.

13 That is where the most pedestrians
14 are injured, the most accidents, the most --
15 however you categories that, that quadrant right
16 there is the most dangerous intersection of
17 Washington, D.C.

18 And that, for us, right, so in terms
19 of what are the priorities, being able to visit
20 the monument and bring your young children and
21 enjoy and experience without that fear of car
22 traffic really is what we're talking about is a

1 really major priority for us that, you know, this
2 chart doesn't necessarily show, right, how do we
3 weight these things.

4 And so, because of that, that site
5 became something beyond our ability really to
6 fix, right, and city plan and move streets and
7 those sorts of things.

8 And so, I think that's an excellent
9 site and I think -- I hope that the city really -
10 - I hope the city does something with that --
11 with that space. I think that's an extremely
12 important space.

13 One other thing I would add that's a
14 less important point, but that was brought up to
15 us in meetings with the National Park Service, is
16 that that's a site that they use for operations.

17 So, they -- Chairwoman Stidham, I'm
18 going to call you on this. I'm going to get this
19 right.

20 If the chairwoman -- she can speak
21 better to this than I could, but that's a site
22 for the National Park Service that is highly

1 operational and that matters to them, and being
2 good partners to the National Park Service
3 matters to us.

4 And so, that was something that they
5 -- that was important to them in these
6 conversations.

7 So, Chairwoman, I don't know if you
8 want to speak to that, but --

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yeah. I could also
10 add that's often a site of First Amendment
11 activity as well as it's often closed for a
12 variety of reasons either because there's
13 something going on nearby or there's an event.
14 So, access isn't always 100 percent guaranteed.

15 During an event, it does serve as our
16 emergency access. If there was a need to get a
17 helicopter in or get other type of emergency
18 equipment in, that's where it takes place. So,
19 it does serve as a huge, sort of, back-of-house
20 operational during large-scale events and
21 everyday activities.

22 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Okay. Well,

1 I'm not going to give up on it even if I stand
2 alone, but I think that some of the issues that
3 you brought up are ones that could be addressed,
4 you know.

5 There are, you know, the way that a
6 site is -- the way you approach a site, the way
7 that the edges are treated, you know, it could
8 actually improve that site in a way that would
9 make it safer for everybody.

10 I mean, I hate to question the
11 esteemed Mr. May, but I'm not sure if his
12 statistics are up to date. So, I wouldn't give
13 up on it.

14 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
15 Commissioner.

16 Commissioner Maloney.

17 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Thank you. I
18 guess I would agree with the general drift of
19 where we've been going. And especially with Mr.
20 Imamura's analysis at the very beginning that
21 kicked us off.

22 This really shows the difficulty of

1 finding good sites on the Mall within the
2 Reserve. There is a very good reason why there
3 is that prohibition.

4 And of the four, I think that, yes,
5 the West Constitution Gardens is the best of the
6 four.

7 It's still going to be a tough site,
8 I think, because it is sort of either -- however
9 you want to characterize it, either dispersed or
10 integrated into the landscape and that's not an
11 easy thing to accomplish.

12 That being said, I also would agree
13 with Ms. Batcheler's comment that that is a site
14 that's maybe worth a second look.

15 You know, I think as it's laid out
16 now, yes, of course there is -- it feels very
17 close to that intersection.

18 I certainly recognize the functional
19 utility of that site for other things, but I
20 think if you did put the memorial there, it would
21 seem to me that there would be a way, especially
22 if its front, if you will, is facing the Mall or

1 facing the Washington Monument and the back is to
2 the intersection.

3 That could be done, but maybe that
4 one is off the table. I think I will be a
5 colleague with Ms. Batcheler in suggesting
6 another look at it, but if that is the case that
7 it is not to be chosen, then I think the west
8 Constitution Gardens side is clearly the best of
9 the other four. Thank you.

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you,
11 Commissioner.

12 Commissioner Tunstall Williams.

13 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: Yes.
14 I would agree with Commissioner Maloney and
15 Commission Batcheler that the 14th and
16 Independence Avenue site has some promise.

17 My concern with the Constitution
18 Gardens West is that it really is the most
19 constrained of all the sites, right?

20 You're very limited in what you can
21 do there because of the way it's distributed,
22 because of the narrowness of it.

1 I just encourage you to think about
2 what your vision for the memorial is and can it
3 be accomplished in this sort of long, linear,
4 meandering way.

5 And perhaps if it is, sort of to use
6 the word of the moment, a journey that you're
7 going on to think about as you move through the
8 passage of the amendment, perhaps that can work,
9 but the gathering space and the event space seems
10 like it would happen outside of the memorial
11 because of the way it is sited and sort of
12 looking towards the lake.

13 So, just something to think about as
14 you think through how you're going to actually
15 use the site and what you think the -- what kind
16 of shape the memorial will take.

17 Because if you build on that, then
18 the Hockey Fields East or the Washington Monument
19 also do give you a little bit more space and
20 ability to play with the program and the shape of
21 the memorial.

22 While I understand that they do

1 impede on other activities that are going on
2 there, it does seem less so.

3 I would say Constitution Gardens
4 East, it seems so already planned that you would
5 just be kind of building on top of something
6 that's already -- I just -- I think your memorial
7 gets lost at that point and it doesn't become
8 this transformational site that you're
9 envisioning.

10 So, just some thoughts on all of
11 them. Agree with the other commissioners with
12 what they've had to say.

13 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

14 Commissioner Fountain. And just to
15 note, I do believe we have gone from questions to
16 discussion.

17 So, just to make notice of that, go
18 ahead, Commissioner Fountain.

19 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yes, I made
20 the same conclusion and I fear I'm going to give
21 the appearance of bandwagon jumping and I want to
22 insist that I had independently arrived at the

1 conclusion that Constitution Gardens West was the
2 most suitable of those four sites.

3 With respect to the 14th and
4 Independence site when we were talking about the
5 other site on the Washington Monument grounds,
6 you know, in my time participating on this
7 commission I don't really recall many proposals
8 to locate on the Washington Monument grounds.

9 And obviously there's a lot of open
10 space there and I worry that if one memorial goes
11 on there, then lots of others are going to want
12 to follow. And so, that's something to keep in
13 mind.

14 And I was interested in Commissioner
15 Tunstall Williams' points just now about the west
16 site and some of the constraints.

17 With respect to event space not being
18 available on the west side, they could always use
19 the event space on the east side when they need
20 it. And so, it's sort of ready-made for them
21 right there.

22 I like the west edge -- well, for a

1 few reasons. I think being on the east side
2 you'd be too close to World War II particularly
3 with the World War II extension into the prayer
4 circle there that was added recently.

5 Whereas on the west side, you know,
6 the ground slopes up so that you're not really
7 aware of the Vietnam Memorial farther down. And
8 so, your center of gravity is really the pool,
9 the lake there and the Signers monument and I
10 think that connections, as you all pointed out,
11 is very strong.

12 As you were showing those various
13 nodes, it was brining to mind for me the FDR
14 Memorial and that series of spaces that you can
15 use that I think give you the opportunity to tell
16 the richer story you're talking about telling.

17 And I'm envisioning something that is
18 not so tightly focused on the 19th Amendment, but
19 just as you started with Abigail Adams, you know,
20 kind of tell that whole 150-year story from the
21 founding to the 19th Amendment.

22 The thing you have to watch out for

1 is that there's no -- you'll have people coming
2 in from both directions. And so, there's not a -
3 - there won't be a clear, linear progression
4 through the site if you do something like that.

5 But, no, I have nothing more to add
6 beyond what other people have already said, which
7 I agree with.

8 CHAIR STIDHAM: Great.

9 Other discussion? I have suggested
10 motions.

11 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Moved.

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. So, based on
13 the discussion -- and thank you, Ms. Laymon, for
14 your presentation, and Ms. Sale.

15 I wanted to first check and see what
16 the Commission's interest is in understanding
17 about the 14th and Independence site in greater
18 detail versus making a recommendation.

19 So, if I could see hands of support
20 for additional work on the 14th and Independence
21 site before making a decision, can I see a show
22 of hands, please.

1 Four to three.

2 Okay. Well, that sort of sets us to
3 have the ladies come back to us with more detail
4 on the 14th and Independence site at the level to
5 which you presented the three final sites today.

6 And, Anna, we can talk about what
7 that looks like.

8 MS. LAYMON: Okay.

9 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. All right.
10 Thank you very much.

11 So, it's four o'clock. I promise
12 three more things and we'll get through these
13 last three things. We're going to do the EMS
14 memorial next. Let me get to that portion in my
15 notes.

16 So, before us we still have the EMS
17 memorial authorization extension and Second
18 Division and then the Garden of Heroes.

19 So, for the National Emergency
20 Medical Services Memorial Foundation -- so, it's
21 H.R.2196 to provide for an extension of the
22 legislative authority of the National Emergency

1 Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish
2 a commemorative work in the District of Columbia
3 and its environs.

4 It was introduced by Representative
5 Richard Hudson on March 18th, 2025, and the bill
6 was referred to the Committee on Natural
7 Resources.

8 Here with us today, we have Jamie
9 Orsino, Vice President National EMS Memorial
10 Foundation, who is signed up to testify on the
11 bill.

12 So, with that, Mr. Fox, if you could
13 promote him, that would be great.

14 Mr. Orsino, are you with us? Can you
15 hear me?

16 MR. ORSINO: Yes, I can hear you. I'm
17 just catching up.

18 CHAIR STIDHAM: No worries. How badly
19 did I destroy your last name?

20 MR. ORSINO: It wasn't very bad at
21 all. Orsino.

22 CHAIR STIDHAM: Oh, good. Thank you.

1 If you would not mind introducing
2 yourself and then you can move forward with your
3 testimony.

4 MR. ORSINO: All right. My name is
5 James Orsino. I'm with the Board of the National
6 EMS Memorial Foundation and I'm an EMS provider
7 for the past four decades.

8 I'd like to thank everyone for the
9 opportunity to speak. I believe Congressman
10 Hudson and Congressman Lynch have provided a
11 letter that will be available to you all and we
12 submitted some written testimony, the bulk of
13 which goes over some of the challenges we faced
14 since the original authorization.

15 We're not going to go through all of
16 that, but I would just like to add that, you
17 know, the Foundation is led by active EMS
18 providers and we're persevered through a lot of
19 these challenges.

20 The most seismic of which has been
21 the COVID issue, you know, where the entire
22 nation was shut into their homes. We were shut

1 out of ours during a two-year period which really
2 led to a difficult cause for us trying to move
3 this forward, but we have indeed moved it
4 forward.

5 We've engaged in a detailed site
6 selection process in collaboration with our
7 federal partners.

8 Independence and 3rd was identified
9 as the strongest location meeting the thematic
10 requirements of the CWA.

11 A national EMS memorial there would
12 provide an opportunity to improve the safety and
13 accessibility of that particular site.

14 We've conducted extensive research,
15 national surveys, conceptual designs, historic
16 research, including work with the Marcel Breuer
17 Archive at Syracuse University, to ensure our
18 design lines with the site's context and
19 historical significance.

20 The memorial itself, again, will
21 continue to serve as a lasting national
22 recognition of the EMS providers and help to

1 inspire future generations to join the
2 profession.

3 This bill will simply give us the
4 time needed to complete this important work.
5 That's all that it does.

6 We're committed to continuing through
7 the process and we're happy to answer any
8 questions and take any of the comments that you
9 might have.

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you very much.

11 Any questions from the commissioners?

12 Commissioner Imamura.

13 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you,
14 Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Orsino. I think you
15 did mention the potential at Independence and
16 3rd.

17 I'm assuming the Hubert Humphrey
18 Plaza there; is that correct?

19 MR. ORSINO: Correct.

20 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: And that
21 obviously that being HHS right now, that there's
22 that thematic connection. Is that what the --

1 MR. ORSINO: Right. That was
2 determined in the -- yeah, the process where they
3 had the strongest thematic connection, yeah, of
4 the sites that we brought toward.

5 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Sure. So, what
6 would happen if you were to gain this out, if
7 that building were -- the disposition of that
8 building or the deaccession of that building
9 perhaps where HHS may no longer be there or that
10 it changes branches of government, the ownership
11 of that particular building?

12 MR. ORSINO: So, depending -- I can't
13 theorize on what branch of government would have
14 it, but I can say that it will always present an
15 opportunity for that plaza to correct some of the
16 issues that have existed there since the plaza
17 was erected in the first place.

18 There may be a stronger thematic
19 connection to whomever ends up there. I don't
20 have any insight into if there are plans.

21 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Just curious
22 what you think that impact might be if, you know,

1 that particular building or that particular
2 tenant there moved out and what that would do for
3 the connection to the proposed memorial.

4 MR. ORSINO: Right. At the time, it
5 was obvious that the Health and Human Services in
6 that building presented the strongest thematic
7 connection.

8 I haven't thought of --

9 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Certainly agree
10 at the time.

11 MR. ORSINO: Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: I'm just
13 curious if any thought has been given to, you
14 know, the state that we're in now.

15 MR. ORSINO: No. If you have any
16 insight into that, I'd be more than happy to hear
17 what your predictions of the future are, but I --

18 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: I really can't
19 predict the future, but --

20 MR. ORSINO: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: All right.

22 Thank you, Mr. Orsino.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Any other questions?

2 Go ahead, Commissioner Batcheler.

3 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: So, I'm
4 having a little difficulty understanding whether
5 we're being asked to weigh in on a new extension
6 or a clarification of a previous extension.

7 But if we were to agree to extend
8 this to whenever it's supposed to be extended to,
9 would that give them flexibility to consider
10 alternative sites if, as Mr. Imamura suggests,
11 the thematic connection is no longer there?

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Okay.

14 CHAIR STIDHAM: So, we are -- what
15 we're being asked to weigh in on is an extension
16 of their existing authority which is due to
17 expire.

18 And this will allow the extension of
19 the authority to September 30th, 2032, allowing
20 them the time to continue to work and complete
21 both site selection and design.

22 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Or November

1 3rd, I think.

2 MR. ORSINO: November 3rd, correct.

3 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Yeah. Okay.

4 So, it's not that it's seven years beyond 2032.

5 It's going up to 2032.

6 CHAIR STIDHAM: Right.

7 MR. ORSINO: Correct.

8 CHAIR STIDHAM: 2032, yes.

9 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Well, I would
10 then be in support of extending -- me personally
11 extending the reauthorization until then.

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Why don't we
13 just take a quick vote and I think we can work
14 that up.

15 So, a show of hands in support of the
16 timeline extension?

17 Okay. So, the record notes a
18 unanimous by all commissioners.

19 Thank you, Mr. Orsino, very much for
20 your time today.

21 MR. ORSINO: Thank you for all you do
22 and your commitment to this process. Thank you

1 very much.

2 CHAIR STIDHAM: You're welcome.

3 All right. We're coming up to the
4 end here. That was EMS. Second Division, that's
5 where we are.

6 Sorry, I can't help with this nagging
7 feeling -- Commissioner Imamura and I are late
8 for Zoning. So, it's like nagging at the back of
9 my head.

10 So, Second Division. Let's move on.
11 So, the next agenda item is S.1353, a bill to
12 extend the authority for modifications to the
13 Second Division Memorial in the District of
14 Columbia.

15 This bill was introduced by Senator
16 Murkowski on April 8th, 2025, and the bill was
17 referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural
18 Resources.

19 Senator Murkowski has provided
20 written testimony which you should have. And we
21 have Mr. Thompson, the Chair of the Second
22 Division Memorial Foundation, with us here today

1 to testify.

2 So, Mr. Fox, if you could promote Mr.
3 Thompson.

4 MR. HART: He's there. This is
5 Carlton.

6 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. Can you hear
7 me? If you can turn your camera on and introduce
8 yourself, that would be great.

9 MR. THOMPSON: There we are.

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. Good to
11 see you.

12 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. Madam Chair
13 and members of the Commission, my name is Aves
14 Thompson and I live in Anchorage, Alaska.

15 I am a past President of the Second
16 Indianhead Division Association and current
17 Chairman of the 2ID Memorials Foundation.

18 I served in the Second Infantry
19 Division near the DMZ in South Korea during 1965
20 and 1966.

21 Thank you for the opportunity to
22 appear before you today to discuss S.1353, what

1 we are calling the Second Division Memorial
2 Modification Extension Act.

3 This act will allow time for the 2ID
4 Memorial Foundation to raise the funds to
5 complete the modifications to the memorial.

6 The Second Division Memorial is in
7 the President's Park at 17th Street, N.W., and
8 Constitution Avenue on the Mall in Washington,
9 D.C.

10 This memorial honors the 17,660 dead
11 soldiers who served in the Second Division of the
12 United States Army.

13 It was originally built by the artist
14 James Earle Fraser to commemorate the division's
15 casualties in World War I and was dedicated on
16 July 18, 1936.

17 Later, two wings were rededicated on
18 June 20th, 1962, by General Maxwell Taylor, with
19 significant battles of World War II inscribed on
20 the west and the Korean War on the east.

21 The granite shaft built in the form
22 of a great open doorway has two wreaths carved in

1 relief flanking the entrance.

2 Guarding the gateway is an 18-foot
3 tall flaming golden sword symbolically blocking
4 the German advance to Paris.

5 The Second Division's insignia and
6 Indianhead within a star is embossed on the
7 sword's handle.

8 In 2018 NDAA, the National Defense
9 Authorization Act, authorized the foundation to
10 add commemorative elements or engravings to the
11 existing memorial to honor the members of the
12 Second Division who have given their lives in the
13 service to the United States, but have yet to be
14 recognized.

15 Specifically, those modifications
16 will honor and commemorate the Second ID soldiers
17 that lost their lives while serving in Korea on
18 the Korea DMZ from 1965 to 1961, while serving in
19 Iraq from 2003 to 2010, and while serving in
20 Afghanistan from 2009 to 2013.

21 Two large plinths will be set on an
22 expanded platform with the time periods and

1 locations of the fallen engraved in gold leaf in
2 the same manner as the engraving on the existing
3 memorial.

4 The plans for the project have
5 previously been reviewed and approved by your
6 commission and there have been no changes to the
7 approved plan. So, we hope for minimal review to
8 enable us to proceed.

9 A large part of the project will
10 perform an almost complete rehabilitation of the
11 memorial.

12 The first phase of the project was
13 completed in 1936 and modifications were
14 completed in 1962.

15 Although the memorial has received
16 sporadic maintenance, the original piece in 1936
17 is 89 years old. The 1962 addition is currently
18 63 years old.

19 It is our intent that this memorial
20 will last into the next century and we'll do our
21 best to make sure that happens.

22 The COVID pandemic played a major

1 role in the need for this extension. Our fund-
2 raising efforts during that time did not live up
3 to our expectations.

4 Commissioners, we realize that this
5 is an important issue and we urge that you give
6 favorable consideration to our request and
7 support S.1353.

8 We pledge our best efforts to work
9 with all the related organizations and agencies
10 to ensure that we achieve a mutually agreeable
11 dignified and appropriate tribute to our fallen
12 brothers and sisters.

13 Thank you for your attention and I
14 will try to answer your questions.

15 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
16 Thompson.

17 Any questions for Mr. Thompson?

18 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: No questions.
19 Thank you, Mr. Thompson, for your service.

20 CHAIR STIDHAM: Yes, thank you very
21 much.

22 ATAT: Yes.

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. So, move to
2 discussion.

3 So, this is an extension for
4 modifications to the memorial. This will extend
5 the time frame until September 30th, 2032. That
6 date seems to keep coming up.

7 So, all of those in favor with
8 supporting this extension please -- a show of
9 hands, please.

10 Okay. Let the record show that all
11 commissioners voted "yes" to support the
12 extension.

13 Thank you, Mr. Thompson, so very
14 much.

15 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Madam
16 Chairman and commissioners. Appreciate your
17 support.

18 CHAIR STIDHAM: Absolutely. Have a
19 good evening.

20 Okay. Last item. So, the last item
21 for today is H.R.2377 to authorize the White
22 House Task Force on celebrating America's 250th

1 birthday to establish the National Garden of
2 American Heroes and for other purposes.

3 So, to give you a little bit more
4 background if you are not familiar, the
5 initiative to establish the National Garden of
6 American Heroes was originally formulated through
7 two executive orders issued by President Donald
8 Trump.

9 One was Executive Order 13934,
10 building and rebuilding monuments to American
11 heroes, that was signed on July 3rd, 2020.

12 The second of which was Executive
13 Order 13978, building the National Garden of
14 American Heroes signed January 18th, 2021.

15 This second order expanded upon the
16 previous one by providing a detailed list of 244
17 individuals to be commemorated with statues in
18 this garden.

19 Although this framework set for the
20 garden's development, the project was halted when
21 President Joe Biden revoked the related executive
22 orders in May 2021.

1 However, returning to office,
2 President Trump reinstated the initiative in
3 January 2025 through the executive order titled
4 Celebrating America's 250th Birthday, which
5 reinstated and expanded on his earlier plans for
6 the National Garden of American Heroes to which
7 this initiative aims to commemorate the United
8 States' 250th anniversary on July 4th, 2026, by
9 constructing a sculpture garden featuring
10 statutes of 215 notable American figures, and all
11 of those are named.

12 So, while a location for this garden
13 and the details associated with it have not been
14 developed, this particular piece of legislation
15 would provide for the ability for this garden to
16 take place on the National Mall.

17 So, that is what is before us
18 specifically and specifically states the Reserve
19 and allowing for the garden to commemorate any
20 individual, groups of individuals, which there
21 are a few things that are inconsistent within
22 this proposed legislation with the Commemorative

1 Works Act.

2 Commissioner Sullivan.

3 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Yeah. Can you
4 talk a little bit about this notion of temporary
5 or rotating? Is there anything in there about
6 that?

7 CHAIR STIDHAM: There is not anything
8 in there about that.

9 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay.

10 CHAIR STIDHAM: To help a little bit,
11 I have been serving on this group looking at a
12 variety of the sites and I believe the intention
13 is a permanent feature.

14 Commissioner Tunstall Williams.

15 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: As
16 you have been looking at this trying to identify
17 a site, do you have a sense of how much space --
18 I mean, 250 statues sounds like a lot given, you
19 know, the challenges that we've already talked
20 about locating smaller, sort of, singular purpose
21 memorials within the Reserve.

22 I'm not sure how we have this much

1 space. So, I'm just curious how much they're
2 thinking.

3 CHAIR STIDHAM: They're looking at a
4 variety of different sizes. The statues
5 themselves could be created multiple different
6 ways.

7 They could be each independently
8 donated. So, you would have a variety of sizes,
9 shapes and figures.

10 Or it could be commissioned outright.
11 So, there would be some consistency to scale,
12 material and statue.

13 But, really, the particulars on that
14 piece is really just speculative based on what we
15 know of the intention.

16 COMMISSIONER TUNSTALL WILLIAMS: Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIR STIDHAM: Commissioner Sullivan,
19 is that an old hand or you have more?

20 Okay. Commissioner Fountain.

21 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Yeah, there
22 are some strange things about this statute -- or

1 this bill because it talks about -- again, it's
2 one of these permissive things.

3 It says it may be on the Reserve, but
4 it also contemplates that the Secretary of the
5 Interior might acquire land in some other state.

6 And so, the Reserve seems to be just
7 one of many, you know, an almost infinite number
8 of options. And so, that's one thought.

9 Then when you look at the executive
10 orders themselves, they don't contemplate that
11 this be in D.C. much less in the Reserve.

12 Executive Order 13934 says three
13 things. It shall be proximate to at least one
14 major population center, it shall be located on a
15 site of natural beauty, and it shall not cause
16 significant disruption to the local community.

17 I'm not sure Washington, D.C. -- I
18 mean, obviously it satisfies the major population
19 center, but I'm not sure it really satisfies the
20 other two criteria.

21 Executive Order 13978, which was the
22 second order, contemplates a vast outdoor park,

1 and I don't think you can fit a vast outdoor park
2 in the Reserve.

3 And then, as noted, this contemplates
4 250 individual works of sculpture. I don't think
5 you can fit that in the Reserve.

6 And so, I think our response ought to
7 track those lines and say, great idea, but the
8 Reserve, you know, but the Reserve can't
9 accommodate it as contemplated by the President
10 or by the legislation itself.

11 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. And I must
12 add that I have to refrain from giving my opinion
13 as I am working on this for the secretary.

14 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Are you --

15 CHAIR STIDHAM: Go ahead, Commissioner
16 Batcheler.

17 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Are you able
18 to provide information on why this provision for
19 the Reserve was added?

20 CHAIR STIDHAM: I believe --

21 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: I mean, is
22 that in the intent of -- it doesn't seem to be in

1 the intent of the executive orders, as Mr.
2 Fountain pointed out.

3 CHAIR STIDHAM: I believe that in
4 looking at a variety of sites and variety of
5 locations, that there has been an interest for it
6 to be in the District of Columbia and that it has
7 been noted that the Commemorative Works Act is a
8 requirement that has to be understood if it is
9 considered for here.

10 So, I believe that this legislation
11 is intended to provide flexibility for the
12 location.

13 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: Okay. Well,
14 what I was going to say is that there are ways
15 that something like this could work in an urban
16 environment. It's not an area of great natural
17 beauty, you know. I mean, some parts of it maybe
18 are, but not them all. It's a place of
19 manufactured beauty.

20 So, the Mall, as we have been talking
21 about all day, is a place of focus of attention.
22 A lot of people want to be on it because their

1 mission wants to be listed by its proximity to
2 the Mall or its presence on the Mall.

3 Something that includes 250
4 individual statues could be something that
5 actually brings meaning to another area.

6 It could be something where it's a
7 garden or a linear garden. It could draw people
8 into another part of the city.

9 It could be some, you know, it could
10 be an area of discovery, basically, which the
11 Mall is not really an area of discovery.

12 So, I'm concerned about the addition
13 of this provision for the Reserve because of the
14 issues that my fellow commission members have
15 raised, but I don't think it necessarily means
16 that it can't be in the District of Columbia.

17 And so, that -- I guess that's all
18 I'll say right now.

19 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you.

20 Commissioner Maloney.

21 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Yeah. I guess
22 I've been trying to get my head around this and I

1 -- the first thing is I have a question.

2 If there are going to be 250 or so
3 statues associated with this, it seems to me that
4 it must be an iterative thing.

5 I don't think you could just make 250
6 statues and then install them in some garden at
7 one time.

8 So, is the expectation that this
9 would be a gradual creation that you would
10 establish a site and then statues would be added
11 over time?

12 CHAIR STIDHAM: No, that is not my
13 understanding is that it would be sort of all put
14 in place at one time.

15 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Okay. So, I
16 mean, the other thing that I'm trying to sort of
17 square this with is the National Mall is the
18 garden of American heroes and I -- it seems to me
19 that -- if indeed the issue was to try to add
20 statues of more people to the existing American
21 garden, wouldn't they simply one by one go
22 through this process?

1 CHAIR STIDHAM: You would think so. I
2 don't believe that's the intent though.

3 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: Okay. Then I
4 guess I'm not sure what to think of that. So,
5 let me think about it.

6 CHAIR STIDHAM: Absolutely. This is
7 not an easy one, for sure.

8 Commissioner Sullivan.

9 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I just wanted
10 to support the idea of having a rotating exhibit
11 to be able to go throughout the United States.

12 There's so many people who are not
13 able to come to Washington, D.C., if that is the
14 selected site.

15 It could start here, but I think
16 given -- I always get this word wrong -- the
17 sesquicentennial and everything, all the exciting
18 celebrations that we have coming up, I think it
19 would be wonderful to be able to have this rotate
20 throughout the country.

21 CHAIR STIDHAM: Thank you. And you
22 did way better -- I avoid the use of the word

1 completely because I cannot --

2 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I think I got
3 it right.

4 CHAIR STIDHAM: -- bring it together.
5 Yes, I think you did.

6 Other thoughts?

7 COMMISSIONER MALONEY: I'll just chime
8 in and say I think I can -- Ms. Sullivan's idea
9 is actually a very good one and something that
10 should be thought about further because, you
11 know, if the idea is to make this broadly
12 accessible to the American people, why not have
13 it travel around?

14 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: And I have to
15 note that a big emphasis of the current
16 administration has been to move the federal
17 presence outside of Washington, D.C., to a
18 significant degree.

19 I'm not sure we could work that
20 politely into whatever comments we write, but --
21 yeah, but it goes to what we do talk about with
22 respect to memorial proposals, which is does it

1 have to be in Washington?

2 You know, when we talked about the
3 Medal of Honor Monument some meetings ago, you
4 know, we suggested that the more suitable place
5 would, in fact, be the Medal of Honor Museum
6 which is being built in Texas -- or has been
7 built in Texas.

8 So, I mean, I think we ought to be
9 encouraging that Washington not be viewed as the
10 home of this, whether it's got a permanent home
11 or a traveling home.

12 COMMISSIONER BATCHELER: And, in fact,
13 just like it would be, as I was saying, a draw to
14 other parts of the District, it would be a
15 tourist draw to other cities or locations, which
16 we are not suffering from lack of tourists here.

17 So, we could spread the wealth -- or
18 not the wealth, but you know what I mean.

19 COMMISSIONER FOUNTAIN: Well, Mount
20 Rushmore is in South Dakota, after all.

21 CHAIR STIDHAM: Okay. So, let me just
22 repeat that to make sure that I have it from all

1 of you.

2 So, really it goes back to what we've
3 really been talking about all day is the space of
4 the Mall.

5 And I love Commissioner Maloney's the
6 National Mall is already a garden to heroes and
7 pointing it out that it could be something
8 different in a different place or it could
9 travel.

10 Does that sound like it got the
11 majority of what folks were saying? And we'll
12 write this up and share it with you. And sorry
13 for my beagle barking in the background.

14 Okay. I see lots of head nodding.
15 So, with that, it has been a long day and a lot
16 of good work. So, I want to thank you for all of
17 your time today.

18 There is a memorials update. I'm
19 going to spare you from that. Take a look at it
20 in your package.

21 If you have questions, please reach
22 out to myself or Ms. Hammig and we'll get you out

1 letters in less than 14 days for your review on
2 all of this, and thank you again for your time
3 today.

4 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
5 went off the record at 4:27 p.m.)
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21 C E R T I F I C A T E

22 This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

1 was duly recorded and accurately transcribed
2 under my direction; further, that said transcript
3 is a true and accurate record of the proceedings;
4 and that I am neither counsel for, related to,
5 nor employed by any of the parties to this action
6 in which this matter was taken; and further that
7 I am not a relative nor an employee of any of the
8 parties nor counsel employed by the parties, and
9 I am not financially or otherwise interested in
10 the outcome of the action.

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A

Abigail 43:16 44:16
101:3,6,15 155:19
ability 18:1 91:3 146:6
147:5 152:20 174:15
able 8:10 19:14 35:1
44:14 51:5 63:5
106:13 146:19 178:17
182:11,13,19
ABMC 83:20
above-entitled 186:4
Abraham 22:7,10
absolutely 43:5 67:5
70:19 77:21 78:3
85:12 172:18 182:6
abundance 32:1
access 57:5,7,8 58:12
65:11 108:7,7 109:17
112:13 117:9 118:5
120:8 124:19 143:15
143:16,17 148:14,16
accessed 65:16
accessibility 108:9
160:13
accessible 57:17
183:12
accidents 146:14
accommodate 63:1
106:16,18 121:17
178:9
accommodated 127:14
accomplish 150:11
accomplished 83:17
152:3
accomplishments
110:18
accounted 108:2
accurate 187:3
accurately 30:3 187:1
achieve 171:10
achievements 27:7
acknowledge 138:6
acknowledged 97:7
acquire 177:5
acre 74:7
acres 36:8 114:17
act 3:3,5,6,7 7:5,6,15
9:8 19:16 20:22 29:12
30:12,13,15 48:10
51:14 52:1 67:14 70:1
73:10 84:4 168:2,3
169:9 175:1 179:7
Act/S.858 3:4
action 10:5 38:19 75:13
104:12,22 105:3
187:5,10
activate 131:3
activating 126:11

active 159:17
activists 103:8
activities 148:21 153:1
activity 125:10 126:6,7
140:1 148:11
acts 20:3
Adams 3:9 18:18,20,22
42:16 43:13,15,16,16
43:19 44:11 45:1,11
45:14 46:7,9,12 47:15
47:20,22 52:8,21
53:12,13,14 57:8
101:3,6,15 155:19
Adams' 101:7
Adamses 55:2
add 14:22 26:1 47:13
52:4 59:12 65:18
89:16 94:18 124:18
130:19 140:19 144:6
144:14 145:6,7
147:13 148:10 156:5
159:16 169:10 178:12
181:19
Addams 43:14
added 155:4 178:19
181:10
adding 132:14
addition 8:8 25:10
48:17 49:3 84:17
87:18,22 107:17
170:17 180:12
additional 37:14 53:13
53:14 64:21 112:14
156:20
additions 89:14
additive 95:14 98:22
130:13
address 11:2 51:12
addressed 36:16 149:3
adjacent 71:9 78:7
112:11
Adjourn 4:6
adjunct 84:12,14 88:19
administration 1:21 6:2
7:8 8:9 31:1 183:16
administrative 52:10
administrator 1:20 6:1
7:7 51:16
administrators 70:2
admitted 23:12,13
adult 133:6
advance 31:4 169:4
advanced 71:18 109:12
110:8 111:8
advances 33:12
advancing 116:10
advantage 36:4
advice 32:21 50:9

advise 7:6
advisors 99:5
advisory 1:4,10,16 5:7
5:9 6:7,11 25:1 94:14
advocacy 70:14
advocate 69:21 76:6
84:14
AECOM 93:12 95:9
aerial 111:15
affect 122:22
Afghanistan 169:20
afield 111:3
African 10:21 113:9
115:13
afternoon 5:4 21:10
47:8 79:15,19 93:9
afterthought 87:10
agencies 34:10 35:2
171:9
agency 26:13
agenda 7:18 18:17 29:7
38:3 41:5 166:11
ago 21:19 54:18 67:18
184:3
agree 12:18 14:2,11,21
27:2 28:8,16 37:4,16
40:15 46:10 64:19
88:15 89:12,20 91:7
131:3 145:16 149:18
150:12 151:14 153:11
156:7 163:9 164:7
agreeable 171:10
agriculture 35:10 82:6
ahead 54:3 78:2 103:18
144:16 153:18 164:2
178:15
aim 104:15
aiming 142:3
aims 125:5 174:7
akin 75:10
Alaska 167:14
Alexander 58:18
align 16:20 29:2 39:7
39:21 91:17 92:8
127:8
aligned 70:4
aligns 64:7
alive 91:6
allied 69:7
allow 30:14,16 49:2,2
52:10 59:15 73:16
75:5 76:13 86:2
100:14 106:18 117:17
164:18 168:3
allowing 60:19 77:7,10
164:19 174:19
allows 18:20 48:11,14
48:21 49:4

ALM 144:4
alongside 95:2
alternative 164:10
amazing 45:8
ambitious 106:20
amending 48:22
amendment 94:18 95:1
98:15 103:4,14 106:6
121:13 124:6 127:16
132:5 134:5 142:2,2
148:10 152:8 155:18
155:21
Amendment's 95:3
America 76:15 95:5
104:6 106:5
America's 4:4 25:9,17
72:12 86:14 104:1
106:7 172:22 174:4
American 1:16 3:2,7,8
4:5 6:6 8:3 9:6 10:21
10:21,22 11:3,13,21
15:17 16:3 30:12,13
31:10 38:5,10 39:8
40:9 45:2,8 68:6,21
69:6,8 72:9 76:22
99:12,17,19 102:11
103:15 104:20 105:15
105:18 106:2 113:9
113:17 115:13 122:12
122:13 129:9 143:22
173:2,6,10,14 174:6
174:10 181:18,20
183:12
American-Latino 3:6
Americans 11:10 76:8
Amistad 44:21
amount 71:5 90:4 120:9
analysis 20:16 64:11,21
65:14,14,15 114:3,5
122:18 124:21 149:20
analyzing 71:16
Anchorage 167:14
and/or 80:11
Anna 93:8,22 95:7 96:3
107:8,13 108:4,15
129:14 135:9 145:5
157:6
anniversary 76:20
98:14 119:14 174:8
annotate 54:13
answer 89:13 132:5
161:7 171:14
answered 140:8
Anthony 134:2,16
135:4
anticipate 125:14
anxious 34:8
anyway 63:22 139:11

AOC 64:6
apologies 88:12 122:5
apparatus 55:13
appear 167:22
appearance 153:21
appendix 86:17
apple 10:18
applicant 26:5
applicants 33:15
apply 40:16 104:16
appreciate 22:20 27:21
 43:3,8 46:11 47:5
 80:3,5 139:18 172:16
approach 13:18 73:16
 115:5 118:4 123:3,14
 124:22 125:14 127:13
 149:6
approaches 126:17
approaching 125:15
appropriate 7:11 11:17
 12:1 17:19 18:5 26:7
 46:13 55:20 57:12
 63:6 65:13 71:3,6
 140:22 171:11
appropriations 48:18
approval 120:4 140:21
approved 128:4 139:21
 170:5,7
approximately 114:15
 117:21 122:18
April 166:16
Architect 1:14 5:19
Archive 160:17
Archives 94:20
archivist 94:5,16
area 15:5 23:13 29:14
 46:4 52:19,21 53:11
 53:13,14 55:16 57:15
 58:8 62:7,11 66:3
 72:16 73:18 78:16
 80:12 85:9,19 86:1
 114:9,10,20,21 115:3
 115:9,19 116:3,12
 117:22 118:22 120:6
 122:21 123:4,9,17,20
 125:12 126:3 128:15
 136:13,14,20,21,21
 137:3,11 179:16
 180:5,10,11
argue 138:17
argument 39:6
Arlington 75:11
armed 81:22
Army 168:12
arrived 153:22
arrow 115:1
art 99:6 100:7
artist 168:13

Arts 1:14 2:2,3 5:21
 6:21 10:1 32:20 38:16
Ash 116:3 118:15
Asian 11:13
aside 56:16
asked 56:19 60:4 67:20
 164:5,15
asking 23:4
aspects 14:7
assemblies 74:17
assembly 25:13
assets 17:2,7
Associate 95:7
associated 55:1 107:19
 124:6 174:13 181:3
Association 167:16
assuming 161:17
ATAT 171:22
attendees 23:5
attending 31:5
attention 79:20 171:13
 179:21
attuned 17:6
audience 89:9
author 43:22
authority 3:18 4:1
 47:22 50:7 52:4
 157:22 164:16,19
 166:12
authorization 48:2,3
 50:1,3,3 51:17 85:14
 92:18 157:17 159:14
 169:9
authorize 4:3 7:13
 19:22 98:13 172:21
authorized 13:11 49:11
 63:15 85:19 95:21
 169:9
authorizes 48:17
authorizing 70:15 71:1
 86:1 98:17 109:7
available 17:7 32:2
 33:14 37:21,22 108:8
 154:18 159:11
Avenue 36:2 151:16
 168:8
average 113:1
Aves 167:13
avoid 182:22
awarded 24:10 26:19
aware 16:5 82:8 155:7

B

B 134:2,16 135:4
B- 76:4
B-17s 76:4
back 18:12 42:11 47:11
 50:16,19 52:16,22

60:4 66:14,16 98:19
 101:15 132:6 135:6
 141:22 144:7 151:1
 157:3 166:8 185:2
back-of-house 148:19
backbone 74:21
background 9:11 82:21
 97:22 100:3 119:6
 173:4 185:13
backgrounds 13:6
backstory 67:17
bad 158:20
badly 6:13 158:18
baked 145:20
balance 117:22
balanced 141:18
bandwagon 153:21
Banneker 36:4
bar 28:14,18 84:21,21
 96:22 97:8,10,14
barking 185:13
bas 81:3
baseball 68:4,6 74:17
based 48:18 69:11
 107:7 109:7,10 110:7
 110:9,14 129:2
 156:12 176:14
basically 44:17 48:22
 55:7,9 123:6 180:10
Basin 110:11,11,13
basis 26:21 48:19 73:2
Batcheler 1:13 5:20
 12:17,18 23:9,10 26:1
 27:3,19 32:15,16 40:5
 40:6 49:8,9,13,15
 50:8,12 51:6 53:5
 54:2,6,15 58:5,6 59:5
 64:9 65:3,6,7 82:16
 82:18 85:5 86:6,7
 88:16 89:21 140:17
 140:18 148:22 151:5
 151:15 164:2,3,13,22
 165:3,9 178:14,16,17
 178:21 179:13 184:12
Batcheler's 29:4 33:19
 51:12 56:13 89:14
 150:13
Battle 1:16 6:6
battles 168:19
beagle 185:13
bear 94:6
beauty 177:15 179:17
 179:19
becoming 37:14
began 67:18 71:1
beginning 32:14 77:19
 146:7 149:20
behalf 8:18 21:8 23:6

29:2 42:2
believe 5:5 19:6 21:8
 22:5,9,20 29:19 31:13
 31:21 32:19 33:10
 34:15 38:3 42:6 49:10
 49:12 50:15,20,21
 52:11 53:5,9 54:21
 60:17 66:8 72:2,10
 153:15 159:9 175:12
 178:20 179:3,10
 182:2
belong 132:5 133:8,9
 133:10
belongs 134:20
benefit 131:1
best 35:8 62:8 73:20
 87:5 98:21 110:19
 129:10,11 131:20
 141:4,14 146:4 150:5
 151:8 170:21 171:8
Bethune 104:5
better 34:8 35:7 63:14
 63:16 83:2 87:21
 101:8,8 105:1 136:4
 136:11 138:18 140:4
 140:8 147:21 182:22
beyond 61:11 89:17
 122:22 146:6 147:5
 156:6 165:4
bicameral 73:2 98:4
bicentennial 119:8,9,12
 119:16 133:14
Biden 97:5 173:21
big 33:22 141:19 144:1
 183:15
biggest 145:15 146:5
bill 3:10 4:1 8:1 9:4,15
 9:16 19:17 20:6,12,13
 21:21 24:2 36:13
 41:13,17,19 42:2
 45:20 47:19 52:17
 53:3 78:14 94:22
 132:16 158:5,11
 161:3 166:11,15,16
 177:1
bill's 8:10
bills 30:14 31:3 41:7
 80:10
bipartisan 72:19 73:2
 98:3 132:7
bird's 111:16
birthday 4:4 43:2 46:22
 76:21 173:1 174:4
birthdays 75:15
bit 9:11 26:2 28:12 38:7
 47:12,19 50:13 67:17
 74:10 86:8 90:8 91:12
 97:10 99:22 100:3

101:2 119:5 137:19
142:16 152:19 173:3
175:4,10
black 141:17
Blackburn 72:21
blah 48:16,16,16
Blake 20:11
blob 125:1
blocking 169:3
blue 113:6
blunt 10:17
board 94:2 159:5
body 70:21 73:8
books 49:1
boundaries 113:22
boundary 58:14 114:16
Boy 62:13
branch 22:6 162:13
branches 162:10
bravely 76:11
breaking 86:13
Breuer 160:16
bring 8:21 66:14 80:21
93:7 94:9 110:22
136:3 146:20 183:4
bringing 77:5 78:1 87:3
brings 88:16 105:9
138:11 180:5
brining 155:13
broad 11:2 106:5
108:22
broaden 85:8 132:12
broadening 107:18
broader 24:14 89:9
broadly 33:1 183:11
brothers 171:12
brought 147:14 149:3
162:4
brush 108:22
buffer 115:17,20 118:8
123:10
build 21:16 67:20 98:8
99:10 104:3 106:21
152:17
building 13:8 16:2 32:5
33:20 34:2,9,14,15
36:3,8 45:17 54:22
55:19 56:2,14 63:4
68:20 94:20 103:20
106:2,4 137:1,18
153:5 162:7,8,11
163:1,6 173:10,13
buildings 13:2 14:8,9
15:4,22 16:12 32:3
35:11 37:9 71:14
78:10,12
built 28:5 69:12 72:15
95:22 98:18 168:13

168:21 184:6,7
bulk 159:12
bullets 69:3
busy 110:3 140:10
145:3
butchered 30:21

C

C 186:21,21
call 60:19 84:10 145:16
145:17 147:18
called 119:9
calling 52:20 59:18
168:1
camera 167:7
campus 33:2
candidates 35:12
capacity 6:11 39:14
capital 1:3,9,19 5:6,9
5:14,19 35:22 38:15
69:20 71:4 94:13 99:8
133:2,7
Capitol 1:15 70:15
capture 146:2
captures 30:3
car 146:21
cards 138:22
carefully 55:17 73:6
145:11
Carlton 2:3 167:5
carve 27:16 84:7
carved 168:22
case 13:16 83:12 113:3
115:8 117:19 118:4
118:14 124:4 125:5
151:6
Castle 36:10
casualties 168:15
catching 158:17
categories 146:15
caught 79:20
cause 160:2 177:15
caution 12:19
celebrate 103:21
105:14 106:3
celebrates 110:17
celebrating 4:4 39:15
43:2 75:15 112:7
172:22 174:4
celebration 119:8
celebrations 182:18
cemeteries 26:18
Cemetery 75:12
center 55:12 68:11 75:6
80:1 155:8 177:14,19
central 86:18 90:14
102:8
century 102:8 170:20

CEO 95:7
certain 51:18
certainly 11:3 12:4
34:12 37:4 60:22
61:14 64:10 79:19
87:2 139:8 142:13
150:18 163:9
certify 186:22
CFA 12:13
chair 1:10,12 5:3,18
6:16,19 10:10 12:8,15
13:20 14:17 15:12
16:4,8,17 17:11 19:12
21:12 22:13 23:1
24:19 26:9 28:19
29:16 33:17 35:16
36:22 37:17 40:1,4,18
41:4 42:5,9,14,18
43:5 46:17 47:4,7,11
47:15 49:12,14 50:2,9
50:13 51:9 52:3,22
53:7,9,19 54:5,9 56:1
58:3 59:4,12 60:7,15
60:17 61:2,4,9,12,19
64:2,5,13,17 65:1,5
65:19 66:16 67:1
77:16,22 79:5,8,11
80:4,7 82:11,15 85:2
85:12,20,22 86:5
88:11,14 89:13 91:14
92:12 93:10,13 94:2
135:8 136:11,19
137:10 138:1,3
139:13 140:11,16
146:10 148:9 149:14
151:10 153:13 156:8
156:12 157:9 158:18
158:22 161:10,14
164:1,12,14 165:6,8
165:12 166:2,21
167:6,10,12 171:15
171:20 172:1,18
175:7,10 176:3,18
178:11,15,20 179:3
180:19 181:12 182:1
182:6,21 183:4
184:21
Chairman 1:13,15,19
5:10,13,20 6:5 167:17
172:16
chairwoman 147:17,20
148:7
challenge 33:22
challenges 159:13,19
175:19
challenging 25:4
change 15:2,9 88:1
changed 21:3 30:1

37:11 69:5 95:16
changes 162:10 170:6
character 27:9 125:2
128:20
characteristics 124:2
characterize 150:9
Charles 45:1
chart 147:2
Charters 94:19
check 156:15
checking 40:22
chief 44:18 101:7
109:15
child 133:6
children 106:12 146:20
chime 183:7
chose 117:19
chosen 151:7
Christopher 1:16 6:9
CIA 71:20
circle 78:8 155:4
circles 78:6 141:13
143:7 144:10
circulate 38:1 66:10
circumstance 37:11
circumstances 23:16
cites 9:8
cities 184:15
city 13:4,6,7 14:14,15
27:20 89:3 95:16 96:3
147:6,9,10 180:8
civic 103:6
civil 22:7 45:3 103:7
civilian 72:2,10
claim 62:4
Claire 93:12 95:8 96:9
107:1 129:18 135:18
144:13,16
clarification 61:6 164:6
clarify 23:7
classically 129:1
clause 84:3
clear 28:18 29:10 37:8
73:22 113:8 116:7
130:22 156:3
clearly 151:8
clip 17:9
close 15:7 84:20 87:6
90:6 110:2 121:14
143:15 145:3 150:17
155:2
closed 58:8,10,10
109:21 148:11
closer 124:5
closing 138:7
co-sponsors 9:15
coalesced 132:18
code 101:17

coders 68:16
collaborate 73:19
collaboration 131:7,18
 160:6
collaborative 73:7
colleague 151:5
collected 62:15
collection 62:11
collective 77:2 104:11
 104:12 105:2
Colleen 94:1
Colonel 81:7
Colonial 100:21
color 143:8
Columbia 1:18 3:20 4:2
 5:22 7:10,14 10:16
 11:18 12:14 15:3
 62:14 158:2 166:14
 179:6 180:16
column 146:2
combine 45:5 130:4
come 13:6 25:8 42:11
 46:11 50:19 56:5
 126:3 127:13 133:20
 134:15,18 157:3
 182:13
comes 34:9 66:11
 84:20 106:12
comfort 118:1,11,15,17
 120:15,16 125:19,22
 137:13,15,16 142:22
coming 17:8 22:14
 25:22 29:6 34:14,20
 48:5 54:10 131:2
 132:6 156:1 166:3
 172:6 182:18
commanding 44:7
commemorate 3:11,14
 16:2 41:8 81:4 99:2
 168:14 169:16 174:7
 174:19
commemorated 67:22
 91:9 173:17
commemorates 73:11
 116:9
commemorating 87:3
commemoration 18:7
 25:11 83:1 86:18
commemorative 3:19
 7:5,9,13 20:2,22
 29:12 30:15 48:9 52:1
 52:21 70:1 84:4 94:12
 99:15 105:22 107:12
 107:17 109:3,8 110:4
 111:14 112:10 113:5
 126:9 128:6,21
 129:11 142:17 144:20
 145:1 158:2 169:10

174:22 179:7
commend 92:3
comment 54:6,16 64:6
 150:13
comments 14:2 16:9,11
 16:21 17:12 29:2
 33:19 37:4,16 39:7
 40:15 51:7 56:13
 61:22 64:7 65:12 83:5
 83:7 89:20 91:18 92:9
 92:13 161:8 183:20
commission 1:4,10,14
 1:16,19 2:2,3 3:2,8,10
 5:7,10,14,20 6:6,11
 6:20 7:4,17 8:2 9:4,9
 9:10,19 10:1,3,12
 12:5 18:18,20,22 32:8
 32:20 33:5 35:21,22
 36:1,13 37:7 38:4,8
 38:11,15,16,18 45:15
 45:22 47:15,20 48:1,3
 48:7 50:18,19 51:4
 53:15 56:5 64:8 65:18
 67:16 69:20 79:18
 80:9 91:20 92:1 94:14
 98:2 138:21 141:2
 146:10 151:15 154:7
 167:13 170:6 180:14
Commission's 156:16
commissioned 176:10
commissioner 5:17
 6:14,18 10:7,8,11
 12:9,10,12,17,18,19
 13:16,21,22 14:18,19
 15:13,14 16:6,7,10,17
 16:19,22 23:9,10 26:1
 26:10,12 27:3,19
 28:20,22 29:1,3,3
 31:15 32:15,16 33:9
 33:18,19 35:17,18,19
 36:5,17 37:1,2,3 39:3
 39:4 40:2,4,6 49:8,9
 49:13,15 50:8,12 51:6
 51:7,9,11,12 52:14
 53:2,5,8,17 54:2,6,15
 56:9,10,13 58:4,5,6,7
 59:5 60:2,3,9,16,21
 61:3,5,10,12,13,20,21
 64:3,4,8,9,14,15,18
 65:3,6,7,21 79:9,10
 80:16,17 82:12,13,15
 82:17,18,19,22 83:6
 85:3,4,5 86:3,7 88:11
 88:13,15 89:14,18
 91:15,16,17 97:9
 135:15 136:6,18
 137:6,21 138:1,2
 139:14,15,16 140:7

140:14,17,18 145:10
 148:22 149:15,16,17
 151:11,12,13,14
 153:14,18,19 154:14
 156:11 161:12,13,20
 162:5,21 163:9,12,18
 163:21 164:2,3,13,22
 165:3,9 166:7 171:18
 175:2,3,9,14,15
 176:16,18,20,21
 178:14,15,17,21
 179:13 180:20,21
 181:15 182:3,8,9
 183:2,7,14 184:12,19
 185:5
commissioners 14:22
 16:21 22:16 26:16
 61:16 62:3 67:2 77:20
 88:10 135:11 139:1
 153:11 161:11 165:18
 171:4 172:11,16
commissioners' 92:9
commitment 165:22
committed 45:20 161:6
committee 8:7,8 9:14
 19:5 20:9 21:18 30:22
 31:1 41:16,19 43:22
 73:20 132:9,10 158:6
 166:17
committees 7:8,11,12
common 74:16
communities 104:22
community 17:19
 177:16
companion 9:16 19:16
 41:6
comparative 127:2
compared 26:3
comparison 27:4
 126:17
compelling 83:10
competing 139:5
complete 57:8 72:11
 161:4 164:20 168:5
 170:10
completed 69:15
 170:13,14
completely 183:1
completes 57:4
complex 33:9 55:15
complications 36:15
component 54:20
Con 141:4 142:11
conceivably 63:1
concept 7:17
conceptual 126:5
 160:15
concern 18:1 59:13

145:15 146:5 151:17
concerned 55:3,19
 180:12
concerns 59:17 60:1
 108:6 110:15
conclusion 126:14
 153:20 154:1
concrete 69:13
concur 40:2,7 61:15
conditions 63:6,7 65:20
conducted 160:14
confederate 45:4
configuration 138:16
confines 52:1
conflict 22:6 128:12
conflicts 27:15 110:5
 141:6
confronted 84:17
congratulate 83:8,17
Congress 7:9,12 9:20
 19:22 20:19 21:20
 24:17 25:1,2 28:10,11
 29:20 32:11,12 38:12
 45:20 50:4,5,10 51:20
 51:22 56:22 63:15
 72:18 79:20 97:5,15
 131:21 132:1
congressman 42:7,21
 43:1,7 46:20 47:2,5,9
 101:5 159:9,10
connected 95:13
 123:10
connecting 57:2
connection 26:13 36:11
 56:22 62:5 73:22
 109:19 112:3 113:15
 113:16 121:5 124:8
 135:16 161:22 162:3
 162:19 163:3,7
 164:11
connections 113:8
 115:15 117:3 123:11
 127:5 128:17 129:7
 155:10
connects 112:15 116:8
consider 17:21 23:21
 33:1 45:9 56:19 65:8
 78:17 114:5 164:9
consideration 16:13
 20:14 46:4 109:12
 110:9,14 111:9 113:7
 143:19 145:4 171:6
considered 9:22 33:11
 37:22 38:14 40:8 44:9
 44:10,11 60:13 179:9
considering 7:12 40:14
 143:21 146:3
consistency 176:11

- Constitution** 71:11 78:9
94:21 111:9,10
118:21,22 119:6,15
119:17,18,21,22,22
120:5,13,17,22 121:3
121:3,13,14 122:4,19
123:15 124:1,1,3,8,14
124:16 125:3,15
126:5,18,19 127:4,17
127:21 128:1 129:5
129:21 130:6,12
131:1 132:6,15,19
134:5 135:20 136:1
138:15 139:5,7,22
140:2,4 150:5 151:8
151:17 153:3 154:1
168:8
constitutional 104:1
106:7
constrained 151:19
constraints 128:19
154:16
construct 10:5 52:13
constructed 74:15
constructing 174:9
construction 38:20
52:6 70:6
consult 7:16
consultation 9:22
38:14 99:4
consumer 141:12
contain 86:10,11
contains 115:21
contemplate 177:10
contemplated 178:9
contemplates 15:21
177:4,22 178:3
content 86:10,12
CONTENTS 3:1
context 74:12 78:13
113:5,16 116:22
117:4 122:7,11
123:12 124:16 160:18
contextualize 129:8
continue 17:21 29:11
33:22 102:5,7 105:2
160:21 164:20
continued 99:20 103:7
104:1 106:7 117:17
continues 25:15 32:14
45:22
continuing 161:6
contrast 90:11 119:2
contributed 86:14
contribution 39:15
46:11 76:15
contributions 46:1
48:20 75:7 105:14
129:8
control 146:7
controlling 97:19
conversation 20:17
34:18 50:17 82:7
95:22
conversations 76:7
100:4 148:6
convey 90:19,22
coordination 107:21
127:20
core 45:8 107:11 110:4
110:21 128:15
corner 78:19 79:1
correct 19:8 42:17
49:11 56:2 60:15 61:9
85:15 136:19 161:18
161:19 162:15 165:2
165:7
correctly 54:17
corridor 113:14 114:12
122:16
Cory 21:5,14
cosponsors 72:20 73:3
council 1:17 6:8 99:4
counsel 187:4,8
country 12:2 46:2 76:12
100:22 112:9 182:20
country's 43:18 112:6
133:3
couple 96:14 97:20
121:22 132:1
courage 79:15
course 36:3 55:18
83:20 129:18 150:16
Court 44:22 45:2
187:17
covered 80:13
COVID 159:21 170:22
cracks 45:12
crafted 22:12 73:6
create 10:5 38:20 50:7
created 22:7,11 102:14
102:22 176:5
creates 38:8 128:14
creating 28:10 38:9
56:11,17
creation 3:8 8:3 9:5
38:5 98:3 181:9
criteria 49:17 51:15,17
51:20 52:5 70:4 85:9
107:2,5,7 108:17,21
109:11 110:9 141:15
177:20
critical 70:7 77:5
103:12
cross 57:4 122:13
crowded 142:16
Crowley 21:6,10,14,14
22:16,17,19
cue 136:4
culminating 103:15
Culp 81:8
culture 3:3 8:4 9:6 16:3
113:10 115:13
curiosity 99:17
curious 162:21 163:13
176:1
current 74:11 125:19
128:12 135:19 137:13
167:16 183:15
currently 9:15 17:1
74:3,13 85:18 118:2
170:17
Cushman 47:14
CWA 70:8 160:10
-
- D**
-
- D-** 76:16
D.C 9:21 15:18 17:17
21:17 38:13 40:11
67:22 70:17 89:1 98:9
116:9,18 117:2,8
118:6 128:11 146:12
146:17 168:9 177:11
177:17 182:13 183:17
Dakota 184:20
Dan 6:20
dangerous 146:11,16
DANIEL 2:2
date 56:4 73:4 149:12
172:6
dated 53:15
Daughters 104:20
122:13
David 1:18 5:21
day 27:22 66:5 76:6,17
99:7,7 113:1 134:17
179:21 185:3,15
days 100:21 186:1
deaccession 162:8
dead 168:10
deadline 51:21
dearest 76:3
debated 132:1
Debbie 41:18
decade 67:18
decades 159:7
December 48:1,5 95:19
decided 68:10 74:9
decides 24:17
decision 79:18 156:21
decisions 83:12
deck 120:7
Declaration 43:22 44:4
94:21 102:16,18
117:6 119:11 121:6,8
121:10 125:6
dedicated 43:17 45:18
67:21 71:22 72:3
94:10 121:12 133:14
168:15
deeper 99:18 100:8
111:4 132:20
deeply 94:11 97:14
defended 44:20
Defense 6:4 169:8
defer 12:13
deferential 22:9
definitely 34:5 35:9
66:2
degree 183:18
delineated 70:8
delivered 138:7
Delta 104:20
democracy 76:21 95:4
99:19 103:16,21
104:12,14 105:3,15
106:3 129:9
Department 1:1 10:1
20:20 34:1,19 38:16
dependent 35:1
depending 23:16
138:21 162:12
depicted 53:12
depicting 48:12
describe 139:2
described 101:6
description 101:9
138:20
deserves 68:1
design 61:18 70:4 74:8
78:18 115:5,6 118:4
123:3,14 125:14
126:17 127:13 160:18
164:21
designated 52:20
designed 83:21
designs 160:15
desirable 28:3
desire 133:13
destroy 158:19
detail 156:18 157:3
detailed 160:5 173:16
details 38:8 174:13
determine 23:14 59:10
determined 71:6 162:2
develop 10:4 38:18
46:16
developed 83:21
174:14
development 34:20
127:22 128:7 173:20
deviation 66:17

- Diane** 1:19 5:12,15
dictate 73:18
difference 40:7 56:15
 90:3
different 13:18 39:10
 52:7 62:11 63:12
 68:16 78:4 83:22 84:7
 88:7 98:8 105:10,10
 124:21 126:15,17
 128:3 141:14 142:18
 144:10 176:4,5 185:8
 185:8
differential 78:15
difficult 23:14 29:10
 88:16 142:19 160:2
difficulties 144:7
difficulty 149:22 164:4
dig 8:18 100:17
dignified 171:11
diminishes 128:20
Dingell 41:18 72:22
diplomats 45:6
direct 22:9
direction 11:18 187:2
directions 156:2
directly 40:16 65:11
 81:4
Director 1:12 5:10
 41:21 67:8
directs 9:19 24:2 38:11
disappointment 76:8
discovered 68:9
discovery 180:10,11
discretion 52:2
discuss 167:22
discussed 36:20 74:8
discusses 40:10
discussing 54:17
discussion 8:19 10:7
 15:22 23:8 26:10
 28:21 29:17 37:18
 39:2 49:7 56:8 73:8
 77:20 80:9 84:5 92:14
 135:10 153:16 156:9
 156:13 172:2
discussions 8:22 31:14
dismissed 110:14
disobedience 103:7
dispersed 125:1 138:15
 138:18 150:9
display 94:19
displayed 20:4
disposal 33:8
disposed 35:12
disposition 15:3 16:11
 17:2 33:21 162:7
disruption 177:16
distance 72:4,17
 118:11
distinction 94:6
distributed 151:21
District 1:18 3:20 4:2
 5:22 7:10,14 10:16
 11:18 12:13 13:3 14:5
 14:12 15:2 17:3,22
 39:19 62:14 158:2
 166:13 179:6 180:16
 184:14
dive 82:14 93:21 96:6
 97:17 107:1 111:4
diverse 106:5
Division 4:1 92:19
 157:18 166:4,10,13
 166:22 167:16,19
 168:1,6,11 169:12
division's 168:14 169:5
DMZ 167:19 169:18
document 102:17 121:7
documents 95:2
doing 13:15 88:8
 101:10 129:20 130:14
 130:17
Donald 173:7
donated 176:8
door 84:15
doorway 168:22
downtown 14:6,8
dozen 11:15
Dr 93:8,10,19 96:5,14
draft 18:13
drafting 102:16
draw 28:10,13 180:7
 184:13,15
drift 149:18
Drive 110:11,20
dropped 143:3
due 127:16 128:7,18,21
 164:16
duly 187:1
Dutch 44:13
dwindle 25:16
-
- E**
- e** 52:4 55:14 186:21,21
Earle 168:14
earlier 8:13 21:22 39:22
 102:10 107:9 108:15
 174:5
early 8:13 101:2 102:5
 102:7
east 109:1 110:11 111:3
 111:10,11 112:14
 120:1,21 121:1 122:1
 123:6 124:3,11,17
 126:6,20,20 128:1
 135:19 139:3,5 140:2
 140:5,7 141:6,7
 142:20 152:18 153:4
 154:19 155:1 168:20
east-west 57:7 143:16
eastern 117:19 122:19
 123:21 125:7 135:22
 136:9 143:12
easy 150:11 182:7
eaten 26:8
echo 16:9
edge 136:1 144:20
 154:22
edges 149:7
EDT 1:10
educational 54:20
Edwin 1:15 6:4
effort 17:4 67:16 68:20
 71:17 74:21 76:18
 86:15 87:2 94:17
 114:1
efforts 3:12,15 41:10
 79:17 113:19 171:2,8
eight 109:12 110:8
Eisenhower 76:14
either 17:22 57:7 65:20
 71:9 72:16 87:21
 135:12 148:12 150:8
 150:9
elected 69:20
element 56:17 84:14
elements 82:9 169:10
elevated 123:6
eleventh 94:5
eligible 53:12,14 72:15
eliminated 141:9
Ellipse 19:1 49:5 55:5
 57:15 62:6 63:8,10,18
 63:20 65:9
embedded 13:4,7
embossed 169:6
emergency 3:19 148:16
 148:17 157:19,22
emphasis 183:15
employed 187:5,8
employee 187:7
EMS 92:18 157:13,16
 158:9 159:6,6,17
 160:11,22 166:4
enable 170:8
enacted 59:14 70:17
enactment 70:22 72:14
encompass 122:20
encourage 17:5 92:10
 106:6 138:20 144:6
 152:1
encouraged 69:16 70:5
encouraging 184:9
endorsing 85:1
ends 162:19
energy 20:9 34:1 41:16
 51:2 166:17
engage 106:13
engaged 160:5
engineers 68:17
engraved 90:18 170:1
engraving 170:2
engravings 26:20
 169:10
enhance 105:20
enjoy 106:13 146:21
enjoyed 139:17
enjoyments 134:9
ensure 45:21 76:22
 132:19 160:17 171:10
ensures 99:13
enter 125:16
entire 46:12 140:12
 159:21
entitled 84:11
entity 21:16
entrance 55:14 169:1
environment 179:16
environs 3:20 9:21
 38:14 40:11,12 89:1
 158:3
envision 22:8 74:13
envisioned 74:3 137:2
envisioning 153:9
 155:17
equal 102:14,22 106:5
equality 99:21 103:3,9
 103:11 104:2 106:8
equally 89:11 146:3
equestrian 61:7
equipment 68:18,21
 148:18
era 90:22 100:22
erected 162:17
especially 15:5 33:7
 37:8 61:22 62:6 87:6
 90:12 96:13 142:5
 149:19 150:21
essence 128:21
essential 71:15
essentially 113:22
 114:22 117:17 120:5
 120:8 136:2
establish 3:19 4:4 8:2
 9:4,9 20:1 28:3 51:15
 67:10 70:16 158:1
 173:1,5 181:10
established 7:4 23:17
 49:18 69:22 70:9
 95:15 105:16 119:7
establishment 7:9
 48:15 75:14

esteemed 149:11
etched 74:22 77:1
eternally 77:1
evaluate 63:12 144:9
evaluated 107:6 109:11
evaluating 17:1
evaluation 63:17
 109:14
evening 172:19
evenly 141:18
event 113:2 120:7,7,18
 120:20 123:4,16
 128:4 136:13 139:6
 140:1 148:13,15
 152:9 154:17,19
events 106:17 108:13
 116:9 128:7 136:22
 148:20
everybody 134:6 149:9
everyday 148:21
everyone's 37:16
evolve 91:12
exact 57:1
exactly 97:10 134:7,20
example 87:15
excellent 83:9 92:4
 147:8
exception 28:10 30:15
 56:11,17 57:13 84:2
exceptions 56:19
excited 104:18
exciting 182:17
excuse 23:4 114:17
 122:3
executive 41:21 67:8
 173:7,9,12,21 174:3
 177:9,12,21 179:1
exemption 85:1 96:20
exhibit 182:10
exhibits 91:4,4
exist 25:21
existed 162:16
existing 15:22 18:7
 32:3 81:1 82:9 83:2
 83:20 84:12 85:1,13
 88:2 90:1 118:15
 137:12 164:16 169:11
 170:2 181:20
expand 137:14
expanded 169:22
 173:15 174:5
expanding 33:2 89:2
 103:20 106:3
expansion 103:14
expansive 116:12
 128:10
expectation 181:8
expectations 171:3

experience 105:10
 108:14 118:8 125:17
 126:2 142:3 144:21
 145:2 146:21
experts 71:2
expire 164:17
expires 48:5 50:4,5
explain 136:3
explanation 108:17
exploring 71:2
exposed 115:18
express 66:1
expressed 14:3 37:5
 76:8
extend 4:1 48:7 49:1
 50:6 51:16,21 164:7
 166:12 172:4
extended 45:14 164:8
extending 49:20 64:10
 165:10,11
extends 47:22
extension 3:18 22:10
 50:10 52:10 89:8
 92:17 103:16 155:3
 157:17,21 164:5,6,15
 164:18 165:16 168:2
 171:1 172:3,8,12
extensive 160:14
extent 18:2
extraordinary 20:3 27:8
 129:20
extremely 130:18 143:9
 144:19 147:11
eye 111:16
eyes 35:13

F

F 186:21
fabric 13:4,7 95:16
 99:15
faced 23:11 159:13
facilitate 73:6 106:10
facilities 108:11
facing 115:11 150:22
 151:1
fact 15:16 25:19 44:2
 66:6 69:1 84:1 97:4
 97:12 184:5,12
factories 68:10
factors 106:9
factory 76:16 81:16
facts 88:4
failed 20:10
fair 120:9
fairly 11:2 17:8 24:11
 51:18
fake 69:13
fall 25:16 35:6

fallen 170:1 171:11
familiar 98:1 100:2,6
 105:6 173:4
families 106:11
family 43:11,13,15,17
 46:1,12 48:12
fan 141:19
far 54:12
farm 76:16
farms 68:10
farther 155:7
fast-forward 108:18
father 57:11
fathers 43:10
favor 37:12 172:7
favorable 171:6
favorite 101:20
FBI 34:20 71:19
FDR 155:13
fear 23:19 86:13 146:21
 153:20
feature 112:2 175:13
features 118:22 128:22
featuring 174:9
February 30:21 53:15
federal 15:4 16:12 49:3
 132:11 160:7 183:16
fee 128:13
feedback 80:15
feel 63:15 98:5 117:10
feeling 166:7
feels 24:11 58:10 115:2
 115:18 150:16
feet 74:14 138:12,12
fell 109:13
fellow 14:22 61:15 62:2
 88:9 180:14
fenced 57:18
fencing 55:13
Festival 113:3
field 116:5 139:3 140:9
 140:12
fields 109:22 110:6,12
 111:2,3,11,22 116:2
 117:14 126:20 128:9
 140:7 141:6,7 142:20
 152:18
fifth 67:19
fight 44:15 103:4,10
 106:6
figure 35:4 98:20 114:4
 130:11 131:19
figures 174:10 176:9
film 68:3 90:21
final 157:5
financially 187:9
find 34:8 73:20 95:11
 100:14

finding 34:11 150:1
Fine 1:14 2:2,3 5:21
 6:20 10:1 32:20 38:16
finely 11:14
firm 95:9
first 5:5,15 6:12 8:1
 12:14 29:6 34:12,17
 43:8 46:6 49:9 78:3
 82:3 83:21 93:18 94:7
 94:9,12 96:12 97:6
 102:20 107:7 111:19
 146:7 148:10 156:15
 162:17 170:12 181:1
fit 109:20 110:19
 129:10 131:20 178:1
 178:5
fitting 95:12 96:19
five 96:1 98:16 99:9
fix 146:7 147:6
Flame 75:11
flaming 169:3
flanking 169:1
flat 136:21
flexibility 29:13 128:9
 164:9 179:11
flip 137:7
floating 139:3
flooding 110:16
fluent 23:16
focal 115:9 123:4,17
 136:21
focus 24:8 28:16 109:3
 111:5 114:19 117:22
 179:21
focused 33:5 109:4
 155:18
focusing 11:6 118:5
folks 99:7 185:11
follow 145:20 154:12
following 70:22 115:1
follows 105:17
foment 101:22
fomenting 102:2
food 137:15
Force 4:4 172:22
forced 101:22
fore 87:4
forecast 35:7
forego 59:16
foregoing 186:22
foremothers 103:20
 106:4
forgotten 76:11
form 168:21
formal 119:3 143:12,13
formation 74:16
formidable 69:12
formula 145:19,21

formulated 173:6
Forrestal 33:8,20 36:2
 36:8 37:9
forth 55:13 80:18
fortuitous 139:9
forward 33:8 37:8 46:15
 49:18 51:5 79:19 83:4
 138:21 159:2 160:3,4
foster 99:18
fought 102:10 104:5
found 57:15
foundation 3:19 20:1
 21:15 26:6 42:1 67:9
 68:19 70:9,16 73:17
 94:3 127:11 157:20
 158:1,10 159:6,17
 166:22 167:17 168:4
 169:9
Foundation's 74:11
founded 59:7
founders 45:6
founding 43:10 57:11
 95:2 99:13 112:6,8
 119:19 121:7 133:15
 155:21
Fountain 1:15 6:5 10:7
 10:8,11 13:17 15:13
 15:14 26:11,12 28:20
 29:3 40:2 51:8,10,11
 52:14 53:2,8,17 56:9
 56:10 58:8 60:2,3,9
 60:16,21 61:3,5,10
 64:8 80:16,17 82:12
 82:13,17,19,22 83:6
 89:22 97:9 135:14,15
 136:6,18 137:6,21
 153:14,18,19 176:20
 176:21 179:2 183:14
 184:19
Fountain's 12:19
fountains 55:6
four 111:8 126:14,17
 139:2 141:3 150:4,6
 151:9 154:2 157:1,11
 159:7
Fox 2:2 6:20 21:7 23:3
 42:3,5,19 80:7 93:7
 158:12 167:2
frame 64:11 82:7 172:5
framework 173:19
frankly 57:15
Fraser 168:14
fraught 84:15
freedom 44:22 94:19
 104:2 106:8
freedoms 133:17 134:8
frequently 109:21
friend 76:3

front 3:11,15 25:9,17
 29:19 35:21 41:9
 44:21 67:12 68:14
 72:12 73:13 80:1 85:5
 137:3 150:22
Fulcher 73:1
fulcrum 143:11
full 103:9
fully 139:21
fun 96:8
function 115:7
functional 150:18
functions 117:18
fund- 171:1
fund-raising 52:7 127:8
funding 52:12 70:12
funds 49:3,3 168:4
furnaces 81:15
further 11:5 28:21
 37:18 64:11 68:8
 92:11 109:12 110:4,8
 110:14,20 111:3
 114:13 118:16 136:8
 183:10 187:2,6
future 43:18 46:16 91:6
 99:19 128:7 161:1
 163:17,19
fuzzy 34:22

G

gain 135:3 162:6
gained 134:13
gaining 73:3
games 74:17
garden 4:5 36:10 93:5
 122:4 128:4 137:11
 142:7 157:18 173:1,5
 173:13,18 174:6,9,12
 174:15,19 180:7,7
 181:6,18,21 185:6
garden's 173:20
Gardens 71:11 78:9
 111:10,10 118:21,22
 119:7,9,12,16,17,21
 119:22 120:1,4,6,13
 120:17,19 121:1,4,14
 122:19 123:15 124:3
 124:17 125:3 126:5
 126:20 127:4,21
 128:1 129:5,22 130:6
 130:12 131:1 132:6
 132:15,19 135:20
 136:1 139:22 140:2,4
 141:4 142:12 150:5
 151:8,18 153:3 154:1
garnered 72:19
gate 34:13
gateway 169:2

gather 87:20
gathering 112:11 152:9
gatherings 106:17
general 1:20 6:2 7:7 9:8
 10:14 44:7 61:7 90:8
 112:7 113:16 114:16
 115:7 149:18 168:18
generally 31:18 53:12
 62:7 108:22
generate 128:13
generations 91:6 99:20
 103:8 161:1
gentle 119:1
George 44:6 75:10
German 11:9 169:4
giants 99:12 105:18
gilt 26:21
girl 99:13 133:2
girls 71:13
give 25:1 32:7 61:16
 65:12 92:6 115:7
 141:13 149:1,12
 152:19 153:20 155:15
 161:3 164:9 171:5
 173:3
given 55:3 57:10 62:22
 72:5 81:14 163:13
 169:12 175:18 182:16
gives 90:7
giving 43:3 133:1
 178:12
go 11:18 31:19 47:13
 50:14 52:19 53:4 54:3
 60:4 62:8 63:15 71:18
 78:2 81:10 82:3 85:10
 87:14 93:19 97:1
 98:11 102:6 103:1
 105:5 111:4 134:3
 136:7,8 143:5 144:16
 153:17 159:15 164:2
 178:15 181:21 182:11
go- 56:5
goal 43:9 73:19 99:10
 100:14 104:3
goals 99:9
goes 18:14 101:20
 154:10 159:13 183:21
 185:2
going 11:8,9 15:8 16:20
 17:6 19:11 24:17
 35:14 36:18 39:18
 42:10 54:11 56:12
 64:16 76:2 82:14,16
 82:19,20 85:16 93:1
 93:18,20 96:6 97:18
 106:22 107:4 118:21
 134:2 141:21 142:4
 147:18,18 148:13

149:1,19 150:7 152:7
 152:14 153:1,20
 154:11 157:13 159:15
 165:5 179:14 181:2
 185:19
gold 170:1
golden 169:3
good 5:4,4 14:1 21:10
 58:1 93:9 96:7 131:15
 148:2 150:1,2 158:22
 167:10 172:19 183:9
 185:16
gotten 17:13 131:8
 140:21
Gould 75:18
government 17:10
 71:13 133:9 162:10
 162:13
grade 67:19 78:20
gradual 181:9
granite 74:14 168:21
Grant 57:6
granted 50:11
graph 145:17,18 146:1
grass 69:13
grateful 96:15 98:7
gravity 155:8
great 15:9 17:11 18:10
 21:13 28:19 29:14,16
 33:17 37:17 40:19
 42:20 46:17 47:8
 50:17 57:4,16 65:1
 67:1,4 76:21 79:5
 80:4 84:22 88:17
 90:13 96:3 99:11
 102:12 105:17 132:11
 133:18 139:19 156:8
 158:13 167:8 168:22
 178:7 179:16
greater 131:12 156:17
greatest 102:3
greenspace 130:15
ground 134:12 135:4
 155:6
grounds 55:5 112:13
 119:4 154:5,8
group 26:5 27:17 70:10
 175:11
groups 39:12 174:20
GSA 16:22 34:13 35:13
guaranteed 148:14
Guarding 169:2
guess 35:8 54:16 55:11
 58:11 65:13 84:2
 87:15 149:18 180:17
 180:21 182:4
guest 23:4
guy 76:2

guys 8:12 9:2 43:9
78:17,21

H

H.R.1102 3:2 8:1,6
H.R.1329 3:7 30:12
H.R.1330 3:6 30:11
H.R.186 3:3 19:14
H.R.2121 3:8 38:4
H.R.2196 3:18 157:21
H.R.2290 67:15 72:14
H.R.2306 3:9 18:19 19:4
47:12
H.R.2377 4:3 172:21
H.R.2717 20:10
hailed 68:15
half 141:17,17
half-acre 117:21
halls 133:8
halted 173:20
Hamilton 58:18 61:11
Hammig 2:2 85:18,21
185:22
hand 52:12 96:3 106:22
135:6 176:19
hand-drawn 78:22
handful 134:14
handle 169:7
hands 12:16 156:19,22
165:15 172:9
happen 17:17 87:11
152:10 162:6
happening 15:2 57:17
140:2
happens 13:10 170:21
happy 10:9 46:22 77:14
161:7 163:16
hard 28:8 43:12 61:16
97:10 134:13
HART 2:3 167:4
hat 102:2
hate 87:11 149:10
Haupt 36:10
head 40:19 97:17 99:3
100:18 105:4 131:17
166:9 180:22 185:14
headstone 26:20
headstones 26:18,21
Health 163:5
hear 21:11 42:8 80:14
88:9 89:7 95:6 158:15
158:16 163:16 167:6
heard 11:12 17:13 34:4
101:2
hearing 9:17 20:19 21:4
82:2 83:4
heart 32:6 100:13
heavily 140:12

heavy 60:22
heck 82:13
helicopter 148:17
Hello 66:15 67:7 107:3
help 7:1 14:13 20:17
25:2 57:21 72:11
77:19 100:10,15
118:7 160:22 166:6
175:10
helped 68:12 69:6 98:7
helpful 14:16 54:8
58:11,15 91:13 100:4
136:2
helping 25:18 131:2
135:3
Henry 43:16
heritage 12:3
heroes 4:5 93:5 157:18
173:2,6,11,14 174:6
181:18 185:6
Hershel 3:3,4 19:14,17
hesitate 10:15
HHS 161:21 162:9
Hi 66:16 93:9
high 28:13 97:2
higher 34:8
highlight 37:20 77:8
highlighted 132:11
highlights 121:5
highly 11:22 128:17
147:22
Hill 70:15
hillside 137:18
historians 69:21 99:6,6
historic 1:17 6:8 78:12
160:15
historical 71:8 73:21
78:13 119:6 121:5
132:12 160:19
history 3:3,7,9 8:4 9:6
11:1,4 14:8 30:13
31:10 38:6,10 39:8
50:14 76:13 94:7,10
94:12 96:7 99:12,17
100:1,11,17,19 101:9
102:4 103:15 104:9
105:18 106:2 113:9
113:17 115:13 133:3
133:10
Hobby 81:8
hockey 110:12 111:2,3
111:11 116:2 117:14
126:20 128:9 139:3
140:6,12 141:6,7
142:20 152:18
hold 94:7 102:20
home 3:11,15 41:9
67:12 68:14 73:12

138:9 184:10,10,11
homes 159:22
honor 3:4,5 19:15,18
20:1,2,5 21:15,17
22:11 26:15,17,19,22
27:8,10 43:9 105:1,8
169:11,16 184:3,5
honored 45:15 70:20
75:21 94:6,11 95:17
honoring 135:2
honors 72:8 168:10
hope 6:12 45:19 46:9
147:9,10 170:7
hopefully 6:2 29:13
hopes 59:9
hoping 58:13
Horse 116:20
hours 68:13 96:14
house 4:3 8:9 18:1
19:19 20:12 21:21
24:21 31:1 41:6,17
46:5,7 55:5,14 58:14
72:20 113:10,12
122:14 132:8,17
143:16 172:22
Housing 34:19
Hubert 161:17
Hudson 158:5 159:10
hug 15:5 148:19
Human 163:5
Humphrey 161:17
hundred-year 98:14
hundreds 100:21
hurried 81:15
husband 101:16

I

ID 169:16
idea 10:12,13 12:5
13:17 14:3,13 32:8
87:14 91:12 107:11
107:18 109:2 110:1
115:7,14 118:12
126:10 129:6 131:12
132:18 134:11 178:7
182:10 183:8,11
ideas 65:20
identified 18:22 33:6
106:9 114:18 115:9
119:8 125:9 141:3,16
142:15 144:7 160:8
identify 34:2 175:16
identifying 59:6 142:6
ignite 99:17
Il 3:12,15 41:11 42:1
67:8,12,14 68:4,12
70:16 71:8,10,11 72:5
72:7,10,17 73:9,13
74:18 77:1 78:7 80:22
81:1,5,9 82:9 83:3,13
84:12,13 86:9,15 87:6
88:1,6 89:15 90:1
112:20 115:2 143:1
155:2,3 168:19
Il's 41:22
illustrated 118:14
image 82:3 136:21
images 80:20 112:18
112:22
imagined 134:21
Imamura 1:14 5:18
12:10,12 16:6,7 64:3
64:4 79:9,10 88:11,13
89:21 138:1,2 156:11
161:12,13,20 162:5
162:21 163:9,12,18
163:21 164:10 166:7
171:18
Imamura's 149:20
immediately 61:6
imminently 34:16 52:13
impact 24:14 75:7 76:9
92:7 162:22
impactful 75:12 89:11
impede 153:1
imperfections 104:6
implementation 107:21
importance 90:22
133:1
important 24:22 25:16
25:19,21 43:8 46:1
71:12 77:4 80:19
86:16 90:17 91:9 95:3
114:4 129:21 130:18
147:12,14 148:5
161:4 171:5
Importantly 74:2
impossible 97:3
impressed 80:1
improve 113:20,21
120:5 149:8 160:12
improved 136:15
improvements 121:20
123:9
improving 137:12
inauguration 25:13
inch 134:12 135:4
inclined 62:2
include 65:14 66:12
104:19 111:9 116:17
117:1 118:6,10 120:7
120:16
included 109:15 118:7
126:9
includes 19:16 63:3
72:6 116:19 117:5

122:12 180:3
including 32:3 81:20
 128:13 160:16
inclusion 94:14 95:1
inconsistent 174:21
incorporated 83:2
 125:21
incorporates 112:5
Independence 36:2
 44:1,4 94:21 102:18
 117:6 119:11 121:9
 121:10 125:7 143:4
 151:16 154:4 156:17
 156:20 157:4 160:8
 161:15
independently 153:22
 176:7
Indianhead 167:16
 169:6
individual 103:16
 110:17 174:20 178:4
 180:4
individuals 173:17
 174:20
industries 74:22
industry 81:20 82:5
ineffective 90:9,10
Infantry 167:18
infinite 177:7
influential 44:16 101:6
informal 119:1
information 35:22
 36:20 58:22 59:10
 71:16 82:21 90:5,8
 129:2 178:18
infrastructure 108:1,1
 110:16
infringe 125:6
initiative 67:18 173:5
 174:2,7
initiatives 127:8
injured 146:14
inscribed 168:19
inscription 81:13
inscriptions 81:6
insert 50:6
inside 17:9 66:7
insight 162:20 163:16
insignia 169:5
insist 153:22
inspire 99:19 103:8,22
 105:22 161:1
inspired 68:7
install 181:6
institution 15:17
institutions 14:7
insurmountable 144:8
integrate 129:11

integrated 138:18
 145:1 150:10
integration 107:10
 139:10
intended 75:2 128:7
 179:11
intent 115:5,11 123:5
 126:1 136:12,16
 170:19 178:22 179:1
 182:2
intention 175:12 176:15
interact 106:19
interaction 75:4
interest 31:6 39:20
 123:20 156:16 179:5
interested 23:5 26:6
 50:17 54:19 88:9
 145:12 154:14 187:9
interesting 29:5 145:9
 145:14,21
Interior 1:1 7:7 10:2
 38:17 177:5
Interior's 20:21
internet 135:16
interpretation 28:7
 87:21
intersection 124:14
 139:8 146:11,12,16
 150:17 151:2
introduce 21:13 67:3
 70:11 93:14 167:7
introduced 8:6 9:16
 19:4 20:6,11,18 30:8
 30:19 41:14,17 158:4
 166:15
introducing 159:1
introduction 9:12
invasion 76:18
investigation 65:22
investment 104:1 106:7
inviting 77:3
involved 107:22
Iraq 169:19
Irish 3:8 38:5,10
ironically 46:6
issue 39:14 159:21
 171:5 181:19
issued 119:15 173:7
issues 149:2 162:16
 180:14
Italian 3:2 8:3 9:6 15:17
 16:2 39:8 40:9
item 8:1 18:17 19:13
 38:3 41:5 42:10
 166:11 172:20,20
iterative 181:4

J

Jackie 47:14
James 20:7 45:2 159:5
 168:14
Jamie 158:8
jammed 139:4
January 8:5 20:12
 173:14 174:3
Jeanne 41:14
Jefferson 44:3,10 45:11
 57:2 112:21 113:11
 113:13
jigsaw 34:10
job 76:1
jobs 68:16
Joe 173:21
John 19:4 43:15,16,19
 44:19 46:7,12 101:7
join 8:11 19:10,11,14
 161:1
joined 7:3 8:17 41:1
joining 6:4 19:7 22:18
 42:21
Joseph 1:14 5:18
journey 152:6
July 168:16 173:11
 174:8
jump 8:21 19:13 82:19
 93:16
jumped 85:5
jumping 153:21
June 168:18
Junior 104:21
justice 20:7 22:20 99:1
 103:17 104:2 106:8

K

keep 35:13 49:20 68:5
 79:22 91:5 97:18
 114:11 116:16 154:12
 172:6
Kennedy 75:11
Kenney 41:21 42:4,9,13
 66:15,18 67:5,7 77:21
 78:3 79:7,12 80:2,6,8
 80:12 83:8 89:6 91:22
 92:10
kept 68:9 132:6
key 43:10 44:6,13 63:4
 131:18 139:10
keys 59:21
kick 93:20
kicked 103:2 149:21
kind 17:6 49:18 54:22
 58:12 84:4 117:16
 139:3,4,9 144:19
 152:15 153:5 155:20
kinds 90:21
kiosk 125:20 127:20

137:1,15
Kite 113:3
know 7:3 10:8,11 11:10
 11:14,16 13:5,9,13,14
 21:2 25:1,11,13 26:14
 27:7,12 28:8,9,9 29:8
 29:13,14 34:13 39:10
 40:12 42:6 43:9,14,21
 44:8 45:6,12,19,19,21
 46:1,3,10,15 48:4,4
 48:16 55:1,7 56:6,12
 57:11 58:18 62:13
 63:11 65:17 66:11,21
 81:2 82:1 83:14 84:3
 86:17 87:1,4,15,22
 88:4 89:6,9 90:18,21
 91:11,20 92:16 96:13
 96:22 97:22 98:11,12
 99:5 100:2,5 102:2
 103:5 104:7 117:10
 130:4 131:10 132:10
 133:8 138:6,10 139:1
 139:20 140:7 141:11
 141:13,20 142:13
 143:7,16,18 144:9
 145:18 147:1 148:7
 149:4,5,7 150:15
 154:6 155:5,19
 159:17,21 162:22
 163:14 175:19 176:15
 177:7 178:8 179:17
 180:9 183:11 184:2,4
 184:18

knowing 61:17 84:21

known 59:22

Koeppel 1:16 6:9,10,14
 6:15,16,18

Korea 167:19 169:17,18

Korean 87:18 168:20

Krier 76:3

Kristi 1:20 5:22

L

labored 138:6

lack 72:8 184:16

ladies 97:6 101:17
 157:3

Lafayette 109:18

laid 111:15 150:15

lake 120:4,6,6,9,19
 123:9,9,15,20 125:17
 130:15 137:8 152:12
 155:9

Lakes 122:4 126:6
 128:4

land 35:14 36:8 177:5

lands 132:11 138:22

landscape 69:5 74:5

107:12,17 119:3
 121:17 125:12 126:10
 127:18 129:11 138:19
 139:10 142:6,7,8,21
 144:5 150:10
landscaped 126:3
language 22:12 60:10
 78:16
large 7:18 14:9 62:10
 169:21 170:9
large-scale 148:20
largely 62:16 76:11
 116:4
larger 62:19 78:8 143:5
largest 103:14
lasting 74:1 160:21
lastly 77:9 78:18 133:12
late 8:14 166:7
Latino 10:22 30:12
 31:11 143:22
laudable 79:17
Laurel 2:2 53:20 54:1
 77:22 85:15 86:5
 97:19 98:12 136:2
law 24:20 25:19 59:14
lawn 120:7
laws 101:17
layers 98:8
Laymon 93:8,9,12,16
 95:7 96:5 129:15
 135:12 138:5 144:13
 144:16 145:7 156:13
 157:8
lead 12:20 123:8
leaders 132:8
leadership 110:18
leading 99:6
leads 103:3 104:18
leaf 170:1
League 68:3 104:21
lean 79:22
leaning 107:15
learn 69:22
learned 77:11
leave 39:22 64:1 92:22
 134:2 139:11
leaves 84:1 120:9
led 102:16 159:17 160:2
leery 59:8
left 25:17 115:1
left-hand 78:19 79:1
legacy 22:10 28:2 105:8
 119:18
legislation 7:13,19 8:18
 8:22 9:18 15:21 21:9
 23:6,20 28:11 30:7,10
 31:7 38:21 47:14,22
 48:6 50:6 52:9 59:14

59:18 70:11,15,21
 71:1 72:19 73:1,2,6
 77:5 85:22 88:3 89:15
 89:16 92:17 93:3,4
 95:21 98:13,17 109:8
 174:14,22 178:10
 179:10
legislative 3:18 10:4
 38:19 84:18 132:9,10
 157:22
lend 17:4
lessen 88:19
lessons 104:15
let's 7:2 8:21 38:2 54:12
 166:10
letter 18:12 29:21 37:20
 66:10 101:16,21
 130:9 159:11
letters 66:19 186:1
letting 91:11 133:20
levee 122:22
level 90:8 157:4
levels 28:6
liberties 133:17
liberty 34:15 99:20
life 77:6 130:15
liked 111:1
limited 125:7 128:18
 151:20
limits 128:6
Lincoln 22:7 27:22 28:6
 57:6 86:20 119:3
Lincoln's 22:10 28:2,7
line 7:17 23:11,12,14
 28:9,13 57:2
linear 152:3 156:3
 180:7
lines 160:18 178:7
link 123:19
linkage 27:21 28:4
links 111:6 116:22
 121:1 122:7 127:6
list 33:21 99:8 143:3
 173:16
listed 180:1
listening 96:14
little 9:11 26:2 28:12
 47:12,19 50:13 55:10
 55:11 57:16 59:8
 67:17 69:13 74:10
 86:8 91:12 97:10
 99:22 100:3 101:2
 110:3,20 111:3,4
 115:2,18 118:10
 124:5 125:1 134:13
 135:4,16 137:14,19
 142:16 152:19 164:4
 173:3 175:4,10

live 91:1 167:14 171:2
lives 68:6 169:12,17
living 75:16 119:18
 133:15
loan 34:15 44:13,14
local 177:16
locate 14:8,12 154:8
located 3:12,16 10:16
 15:18 41:11 48:12,14
 53:6,11 60:8 62:4
 73:13,14 78:10 109:9
 111:22 114:14 118:18
 129:4 132:2 177:14
locates 112:10
locating 14:14 28:14
 58:13 64:20 121:3
 175:20
location 3:4,5 17:20
 18:6,21 19:16,18
 34:11 63:9 67:14 71:3
 71:7 73:10 78:9 85:9
 88:7 110:17 111:21
 113:7,16,21 114:6
 117:12,15 118:1
 123:7 124:9,17
 125:11,16 126:18
 128:18 137:3,14
 160:9 174:12 179:12
locations 9:20 37:14
 38:13 40:10 108:12
 111:14 122:10 124:22
 126:22 170:1 179:5
 184:15
Lodge 112:21 114:15
 115:10,20
logical 62:7 63:21
long 103:10 136:20
 152:3 185:15
longer 91:12 108:17
 162:9 164:11
look 12:10 29:7 32:1,5
 46:15 78:22 83:4
 109:1 115:4 118:21
 136:4,20 150:14
 151:6 177:9 185:19
looked 46:8 107:20
 108:3,9,20 109:5,6,16
 109:22 110:10 111:19
 114:3,8 115:8 116:2
 117:13,20 124:1
 126:14 127:1 131:19
 145:10
looking 21:16 29:9 36:1
 37:13 49:5 50:22
 58:19 78:5 112:19,20
 112:22 119:21 121:22
 122:1,3 124:12
 152:12 175:11,16

176:3 179:4
looks 35:7 54:9 87:9
 157:7
lose 135:17
lost 76:13 153:7 169:17
lot 7:1 15:8 34:18,21
 36:15 40:19 47:20
 55:12 57:20 89:3
 97:15 124:2,17 126:6
 128:1 131:15 132:3
 154:9 159:18 175:18
 179:22 185:15
lots 35:15 154:11
 185:14
loud 69:2
love 185:5
Lovingly 145:17
lower 28:5 78:19
lucky 98:5 104:16
lumberjacks 68:17
Lynch 159:10

M

Madam 16:8 64:5 79:11
 88:14 138:3 161:14
 167:12 172:15
Mae 76:3
magnitude 95:17
maintenance 170:16
major 147:1 170:22
 177:14,18
majority 185:11
making 83:8 96:1 137:8
 156:18,21
Mall 3:13,16 13:12,14
 14:15 15:6,7 16:12
 17:3 20:2 25:8 26:3,8
 26:8 27:5,15,18 28:15
 31:11 32:6 41:11 45:9
 55:18 72:6 73:14,15
 84:19 86:21 94:15
 95:14 97:1 98:22
 99:11,14 105:7,12,20
 109:3 111:17 113:20
 117:5 118:17 120:3
 120:15 121:18 127:9
 127:12 129:12,19
 130:10,22 131:16,21
 132:3,4,14,21 133:11
 134:21 143:10,12,14
 150:1,22 168:8
 174:16 179:20 180:2
 180:2,11 181:17
 185:4,6
Mall's 113:19
Malliotakis 30:20
Maloney 1:18 5:21
 13:21,22 36:18 37:2,3

61:20,21 64:8 65:21
 89:18 149:16,17
 151:14 180:20,21
 181:15 182:3 183:7
Maloney's 91:18 185:5
managed 55:17
Manager 2:2
managing 71:15
manner 170:2
manufactured 179:19
manufacturers 68:18
map 53:13,20,21 66:13
Marcel 160:16
March 19:3 20:7 41:14
 41:18 72:20 158:5
market 34:14
marks 103:14
Mary 104:5
masculine 129:1
Mason 75:10
massings 119:2
massive 103:16
matching 48:19
material 176:12
matrix 144:8
matter 99:1 186:4 187:6
matters 148:1,3
MATTHEW 2:1
Maxwell 168:18
may/shall 78:15
Mayor 1:18 5:21
McGraw 2:1 19:9 40:21
 41:2 42:15,17 53:19
 54:4 80:20 89:19
McLeod 104:5
McMahon 6:3
meadows 119:1
mean 13:2,9 23:19 24:1
 25:9 29:9 36:10 39:5
 39:13 49:19,19 55:17
 58:17 65:10 84:16
 140:20 142:13 149:10
 175:18 177:18 178:21
 179:17 181:16 184:8
 184:18
meandering 119:2
 152:4
meaning 180:5
meaningful 97:14 100:9
 104:13
means 180:15
meant 97:14,16 100:7
meat 96:10 104:9
medal 3:4,5 19:15,18
 19:22 20:4 21:15,17
 22:5,11 24:9 26:15,17
 26:19 27:8,10 184:3,5
media 90:20

Medical 3:19 157:20
 158:1
meeting 5:6,12,16 6:12
 6:22 8:13 15:11 29:6
 42:7 50:20 160:9
meetings 50:22 147:15
 184:3
member 1:17
members 24:10 25:2,4
 27:13,17 51:3 65:18
 79:20 88:10 141:2
 167:13 169:11 180:14
memorial 1:3,9 2:2 3:9
 3:10,14,19 4:2 5:9
 18:18,20,21,22 24:2
 24:11 26:7 28:6 37:12
 41:7,22 42:1 45:10,15
 45:21 46:9 47:15,20
 48:1,8,11 50:7,14,22
 52:8,11,19 53:12,13
 53:15 54:19 56:3,7,12
 58:13 59:22 67:9,14
 69:16,21 70:5,13,17
 71:9,10,11,21 72:1,3
 72:5,7,11,15,17 73:10
 73:11,22 74:2,6 75:2
 75:10,14 77:4 78:8
 80:11 81:1,3 82:10
 83:3,13,20 84:12
 85:13 86:9,20 87:5,7
 87:9,9,18 88:1,6,19
 90:2,7 92:18 94:13
 98:13,17 110:21
 112:20,21 113:11,13
 114:19,20,22 115:2
 116:9,18 117:2,6,7,9
 118:6,8 119:3,10
 121:11,12 122:9,9
 125:9,17 127:21
 128:11,15 133:15
 142:18 143:1 150:20
 152:2,10,16,21 153:6
 154:10 155:7,14
 157:14,17,20 158:1,9
 159:6 160:11,20
 163:3 166:13,22
 168:1,4,5,6,10 169:11
 170:3,11,15,19 172:4
 183:22
memorial's 48:3
Memorial-Washington
 122:15
memorials 5:7 7:16
 17:22 18:2 23:18
 24:14 27:14 28:15
 29:8 48:10,14 55:4
 84:19 87:16 127:6
 133:4 167:17 175:21

185:18
memory 77:2
men 72:7 102:13,19,21
 104:4
mention 16:21 20:10
 104:11 161:15
mentioned 35:11 58:8
 78:5 93:4 96:15 97:9
 108:4,15 116:18
 120:14,20 122:8
 126:15 129:18 138:14
mess 49:6
met 1:10 51:18 96:22
 130:1
metro 112:16
Michael 19:8 54:1 81:10
 82:4
middle 54:12 117:16
milestones 51:19
military 3:12,15 22:6
 41:10 68:17 72:1
 81:14
million 48:18 67:11
millions 68:9 134:18
mind 66:11 78:1 103:19
 116:16 154:13 155:13
 159:1
minimal 170:7
minister 45:2
minuses 127:2
mirrored 102:17
missed 93:5
mission 67:10 180:1
mix 35:4
mixed 85:17
mockup 78:20
model 67:20 69:12
modeled 121:8
modest 63:2 74:6 75:9
 79:2
Modification 168:2
modifications 4:1
 87:16 166:12 168:5
 169:15 170:13 172:4
modify 89:16
moment 16:13 152:6
momentum 73:3
MONDAY 1:6
months 96:11 131:7
monument 3:4,5,17
 7:21 19:15,18 21:16
 22:8 45:10 63:2 67:11
 67:21 86:19 94:3,9
 95:12,12,15,21 96:19
 98:9,21 99:9,10
 100:15,19 105:9,11
 105:13,20 106:13,14
 106:19,20 107:14

111:11,20 112:1,2,5,7
 112:12,18 113:1,8
 114:7 115:6,12,16
 116:8,14 117:1 118:5
 118:13 121:2,17
 122:3,8,15 123:18
 124:11 126:3,21
 127:11 128:11,15,16
 128:22 129:4 130:4
 130:13,19 131:3,19
 132:2,4,15,18 134:17
 142:7 143:13 146:4
 146:20 151:1 152:18
 154:5,8 155:9 184:3
monument's 98:3
 100:16
Monumental 107:11
monuments 1:16 6:6
 27:14 57:3 62:11
 100:6,10 133:4
 173:10
Moolenaar 19:4,7 42:7
 43:1,7 47:2,5,9
Moore 20:11
morning 14:1 90:15
mother 106:12
motions 156:10
Mount 184:19
move 41:5 45:20 50:22
 51:5 92:15 93:1
 125:16 135:10 137:13
 147:6 152:7 159:2
 160:2 166:10 172:1
 183:16
moved 114:9,13 118:16
 156:11 160:3 163:2
movement 33:8 37:9
 49:19 101:12,15
 103:2,11 116:11
 121:8
movie 43:14
moving 18:15,17 34:10
 38:2 79:19 116:1
 138:21
multiple 13:5 66:4
 70:14 112:18 122:7
 176:5
munitions 69:4 71:14
 78:9
Murkowski 166:16,19
museum 3:2,6,7,8 8:3
 9:5,21 10:5,14 12:5
 13:1,14,19 14:4 15:17
 17:16 20:1 21:15
 30:12,13,16 36:11
 37:12 38:5,10,13,20
 39:8 40:9,10 90:13
 91:2,21 92:6,11 113:9

113:17 115:12 143:19
143:21,22 144:1
184:5
museums 10:21 11:1,8
11:16 12:1 17:22 18:2
29:8 30:16,17 31:10
32:22 33:3 39:18
109:4
mute 22:14
mutually 171:10

N

N.W 15:19 18:8 168:7
nagging 166:6,8
name 5:8 6:13 19:19
67:7 94:1 158:19
159:4 167:13
named 174:11
names 87:19
narrative 92:5 132:12
narrow 24:7 27:3,4 28:1
28:17
narrow-focused 24:11
narrower 39:12,12
narrowness 151:22
nation 100:12 102:12
133:18 159:22
nation's 71:4 95:2 99:8
133:2,7,10,14
national 1:1,3,9,13,19
3:2,3,5,6,8,13,16,17
3:18 4:4 5:6,9,11,14
7:21 8:3 9:5 15:7
19:15,18,22 20:2
21:15,17 30:11 31:11
32:6 35:21 38:5,9,15
41:11 45:9 69:19,19
70:3 72:6 73:14,15
74:4 94:3,13,14,20
95:14 97:1 98:4,22
99:11,14,16 100:10
105:7,12,19,19,20
109:3 111:17 113:9
113:19,20 114:7
115:12,21 117:5
118:16,17 120:3,15
121:2,18 127:9,10,12
129:3,12,19 130:3,10
130:21 131:16,20
132:2,4,13,14,20
133:11 134:21 147:15
147:22 148:2 157:19
157:22 158:9 159:5
160:11,15,21 169:8
173:1,5,13 174:6,16
181:17 185:6
nationalities 10:19 11:6
11:7

nationality 18:7
Native 10:21
natural 8:7 9:14 13:10
19:5 20:9 31:1 41:16
41:20 132:8 158:6
166:17 177:15 179:16
NCMAC 2:2 9:22 49:18
NCPC 15:1 29:2 139:20
NCPC's 61:22
NDAA 169:8
near 46:5 76:19 83:13
167:19
nearby 108:12 112:15
148:13
nearly 69:10
necessarily 12:22 14:4
110:19 147:2 180:15
necessary 70:11 76:17
101:18 141:20
need 35:5 36:15 42:6
49:22 50:2 66:21 91:2
91:3,8 92:22 93:11
107:20 133:6 148:16
154:19 171:1
needed 64:12 68:21
135:3 161:4
needs 66:3 108:2
negotiated 44:12
neither 187:4
never 134:21 141:19
new 8:6 18:2 23:18 28:5
28:15 31:10 32:5 34:2
36:11 37:20 39:1
48:10 50:1,2,6 52:9
84:18 87:22 90:12
95:15 97:2 101:17
102:12 128:21 164:5
newly-appointed 94:2
news 89:5
nexus 12:3 17:18 33:6
71:8 72:5 78:13
107:13 109:17 110:22
128:3
nicer 137:9
nodding 40:19 185:14
nodes 125:9 126:19
155:13
nominated 44:3
nominating 44:6
non 76:17
non-voting 1:17
nonfederal 48:19 49:3
nonprofit 70:10
nonvoting 6:11
Normandy 69:2
north 58:17 61:7 114:15
115:10 116:3 137:14
north-south 57:8

143:17
northeast 19:1 115:11
124:12
northern 57:9 125:8
northwest 71:10
notable 174:10
notably 72:8
note 15:15 40:7 73:5
113:12 117:8 122:14
124:5 126:14 144:18
153:15 183:15
noted 21:19 113:21
125:18 178:3 179:7
notes 109:8 157:15
165:17
notice 153:17
notion 175:4
notwithstanding 60:13
November 164:22
165:2
number 7:19 29:8 50:21
56:18 109:6 177:7

O

o'clock 157:11
oasis 75:3
obelisk 55:22
obelisks 55:6
object 56:14 129:1
observations 142:11
obvious 62:5 163:5
obviously 26:13 43:20
65:10 154:9 161:21
177:18
occupied 55:8
occupies 34:1
odd 62:9,10
offer 75:3 108:13
123:11 142:10 145:11
offers 116:11 121:17
128:9
office 14:9 34:14 95:19
174:1
officials 69:20
oh 79:9 82:16 93:3
158:22
Ohio 110:10,20
okay 5:3 8:20 9:3 18:11
19:12 22:17 23:8
29:18 30:5 31:8 37:19
38:2 40:4,18,19 41:4
42:9 43:7 46:21 47:11
48:12,22 51:6,9 53:8
53:8,17 54:5,9 60:16
64:17 65:1 66:9,13
67:1 77:22 78:2 79:8
82:15 86:3 92:15
93:13,13 97:21 104:9

105:5 111:12 133:19
134:16 136:7 137:6
137:21 140:14 143:6
148:22 156:12 157:2
157:8,9 164:13 165:3
165:12,17 167:6
172:1,10,20 175:9
176:20 179:13 181:15
182:3 184:21 185:14
old 75:16 76:4 170:17
170:18 176:19
oldest 75:16
Once 141:16
one-to-one 48:19
ones 33:11 78:6 142:15
149:3
ongoing 120:12 129:19
open 10:6 31:4 39:2
40:14 64:10 73:7 80:8
80:14 84:15 110:1
111:22 112:11 113:14
115:2 116:11 119:1
120:10 154:9 168:22
operational 66:3 148:1
148:20
operations 115:22
147:16
opinion 31:22 80:18
83:22 178:12
opportune 16:13
opportunities 32:2 36:5
37:21 128:2
opportunity 15:5,10
29:14 33:16 35:15
43:4 45:13 46:15
67:15 70:20 90:13
127:7 131:14 132:12
142:5 144:2,4 145:11
155:15 159:9 160:12
162:15 167:21
oppose 12:4
opposed 10:12,13
13:17 16:14 17:15
27:18 73:14 125:10
126:19
option 140:5
options 177:8
orange 54:14
order 173:9,13,15 174:3
177:12,21,22
orders 173:7,22 177:10
179:1
organization 103:6
organizations 104:19
107:22 171:9
organized 102:8 103:2
organizers 17:5
original 52:17 159:14

170:16
originally 30:7 38:22
 49:10 119:7 168:13
 173:6
Orsino 158:9,14,16,20
 158:21 159:4,5
 161:14,19 162:1,12
 163:4,11,15,20,22
 165:2,7,19,21
OSS 71:19
other's 130:6
ought 178:6 184:8
outcome 187:10
outdoor 177:22 178:1
outreach 139:18
outright 176:10
outside 55:9 114:10,12
 146:6 152:10 183:17
Oval 95:19
overall 28:7
overlaid 108:21 123:14
 123:17 126:9
overlaps 128:3
overlay 126:5
overrides 48:9
oversaw 94:17
oversees 132:11
overtly 83:19
Oveta 81:8
ownership 162:10

P

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
 5:1
p.m 1:10 5:2 186:5
package 185:20
packages 67:2
packet 47:17 130:9
pain 83:7
pandemic 170:22
panel 81:20 82:5
panels 81:3 87:22 90:1
 144:4
paper 102:20
parameters 65:22
paring 11:5
Paris 169:4
park 1:1,13 5:11 46:5
 69:19 70:3 99:16
 115:21 116:19 118:16
 118:18 123:21 126:12
 128:14 137:11 147:15
 147:22 148:2 168:7
 177:22 178:1
parking 57:20
parks 26:4
part 13:7 18:5 25:12,12
 28:1,6 45:16 59:13

89:3,10 90:14 101:20
 107:12 109:2 110:10
 112:12 113:18 114:5
 118:9,16 119:7
 120:12,18 125:21
 126:8 131:12 132:13
 135:1 140:9 141:21
 143:12,13 144:3,17
 145:1,19 170:9 180:8
participant 92:21
participants 8:16
participated 87:1
participates 6:10
participating 154:6
particular 16:1 22:2
 47:21 52:19 63:10
 160:13 162:11 163:1
 163:1 174:14
particularly 155:2
particulars 176:13
parties 187:5,8,8
partner 91:22
partners 104:17,19
 148:2 160:7
parts 14:15 179:17
 184:14
passage 152:8
passed 20:12 21:21
 24:20 28:11 36:13
 98:13,17
passes 24:2
path 83:15 98:2 124:13
 137:19
paths 119:2
patriotically 76:12
patriotism 68:12
 103:22
Paul 6:3
pavilion 55:12 62:19
 121:19
pay 72:1
PDF 54:12
pedestrians 146:13
peers 12:13 16:10
pen 44:10 69:14
pending 22:1
people 12:3 13:6 39:16
 45:7,17 46:11 57:18
 86:14 91:1 108:7
 120:8 126:2 134:7
 138:11 142:4 156:1,6
 179:22 180:7 181:20
 182:12 183:12
perceived 108:4
percent 52:12 69:9,10
 148:14
percolate 91:12
perfect 97:21 131:4

perform 170:10
performing 71:15
perimeter 66:7
period 49:2 51:17 160:1
periods 169:22
permanent 26:21 75:22
 175:13 184:10
permanently 94:18
permissive 60:6,7
 177:2
permits 128:13
permitted 140:13
permitting 52:6
persevered 159:18
personal 66:20
personally 11:20
 165:10
perspective 15:1
Peter 146:9
phase 121:20 170:12
photo 78:11
photograph 111:16,16
photos 116:7 121:22
phrase 102:3
Phyllis 75:18
physical 122:7,11
physically 30:18
pick 13:12 117:15 142:7
picked 117:16
picture 141:14
piece 9:18 21:9 23:6,20
 30:5 47:21 48:7,22
 72:18 86:14 98:16
 131:18 170:16 174:14
 176:14
pieces 7:19 25:16 30:6
 30:7,10 31:7 48:6
 92:17 93:3,4 100:7
pillars 74:14,19,20
pilots 68:17
pinched 139:5
pipeline 10:22
place 17:17 25:20 27:17
 27:19 32:4 46:10
 55:21 63:21 83:21
 106:11,16,17 113:2
 121:1 143:1 148:18
 162:17 174:16 179:18
 179:21 181:14 184:4
 185:8
place-making 106:18
 145:13
placed 12:7 18:21
 146:4
placement 49:4 110:16
places 12:2 31:18 63:19
 105:7
placing 132:18

plan 10:4 38:19 118:18
 120:15 126:6 135:19
 136:10 137:8 139:22
 143:5 147:6 170:7
planes 68:20 81:16
planned 8:15 47:18
 153:4
planning 1:19 5:14
 35:22 38:15 69:20
 128:10
plans 121:19 137:12,17
 162:20 170:4 174:5
plate 68:5
platform 169:22
play 152:20
played 44:5 106:1
 116:10 170:22
players 68:4
plaza 120:7,18,20
 121:19 122:1,2,4,20
 123:4,16 128:4
 136:13 137:4 161:18
 162:15,16
please 42:4 43:5 66:11
 78:1 82:17 99:4,22
 100:18 104:8 105:5
 108:16,19 111:18
 112:4,17 113:18
 114:2 116:1,13,21
 117:13 118:3,20
 119:5,20 120:2,11,22
 121:21 122:6,17
 123:2,13,22 124:7,15
 124:20 125:13 126:4
 126:13 127:1 129:3
 129:14 130:7 131:18
 131:22 132:7,16,22
 133:12,19 156:22
 172:8,9 185:21
pledge 171:8
plinths 169:21
plot 137:4
plus 93:4
pluses 127:2
point 18:6 20:20 24:19
 33:7 49:22 50:10,15
 56:7 61:6 63:11 66:11
 88:17 130:5,8 131:9
 137:2 143:11 147:14
 153:7
pointed 57:1 62:9 66:7
 155:10 179:2
pointing 89:22 185:7
points 55:7 83:11
 126:11 154:15
Police 116:19 118:19
politely 183:20
politically 44:17

poll 8:16
pool 116:4 155:8
population 11:3 84:8
 177:14,18
portion 109:14 117:20
 120:10 122:19 123:1
 124:12 125:3,8,20
 126:12 157:14
position 20:21 22:4
 37:6 94:7
possess 134:9
possibility 38:9 90:12
possible 9:20 16:16
 35:11 38:12 40:10
 73:20 98:21
posted 34:16,16
potential 3:2 8:2 9:5
 15:3 16:11 25:7 32:4
 33:6 46:9 59:6 88:22
 89:4 115:5 139:7
 161:15
potentially 13:3 32:2
 136:22
power 104:12
powerful 76:5
praise 69:3
prayer 155:3
precedents 103:6
predict 163:19
predictable 11:7
predictions 163:17
preeminent 73:22
prefer 28:4
preferred 36:14
preliminary 70:4
prepared 53:14
prerogative 51:22
prescription 84:18
presence 180:2 183:17
present 1:12 2:1 5:12
 26:16 162:14
presentation 7:20 36:1
 36:21 77:18 83:9 92:4
 96:4 139:17 140:20
 156:14
presentations 145:20
presented 45:3 52:16
 69:14 157:5 163:6
Preservation 1:17 6:8
preserve 133:17
presidency 28:7
president 9:20 22:11
 27:22 28:1 38:12
 43:20 44:18,20 46:6
 81:11 95:7,20 97:5,5
 119:15 158:9 167:15
 173:7,21 174:2 178:9
President's 46:5 168:7

presidential 51:4
presidents 45:7 62:6
 105:8
presiding 1:10
presumption 10:15
 28:14
presumptuous 28:12
pretty 10:18 12:20 31:9
 45:8 52:18 100:7
 140:10,12
previous 19:22 20:18
 29:20 37:20 50:3 56:2
 164:6 173:16
previously 31:15 32:9
 37:7 40:16 49:1
 116:18 120:14 170:5
primary 56:21 116:22
principal 95:8 112:1
priorities 146:19
priority 147:1
privileges 134:8
probably 15:10 35:6
 81:2 138:6,19 141:4
problem 66:18
problematic 84:9
proceed 43:6 170:8
proceeded 135:21
proceedings 187:3
process 17:1 59:3,7,19
 59:20 60:12 63:12
 69:22 70:8 74:10 98:6
 109:14 141:10,21,21
 146:8 160:6 161:7
 162:2 165:22 181:22
proclaiming 119:17
proclamation 119:16
produced 69:3
profession 161:2
program 2:2 56:3,7
 58:16 59:22 64:22
 95:13 106:10,20
 107:8 109:16,20
 116:12 121:18 129:10
 152:20
programming 112:14
 141:5
programs 108:14
progress 51:19
progression 13:11
 156:3
Progressive 100:22
prohibition 48:10 150:3
project 67:19 68:11
 77:9 120:4,19 123:15
 128:5 170:4,9,12
 173:20
projects 97:7,13
proliferation 39:11

prominence 57:10
prominent 46:10 72:8
 86:20 123:7 143:9
 144:19
promise 104:2 106:8
 141:7 151:16 157:11
promote 21:7 42:3,19
 158:13 167:2
properties 18:4
proposal 7:17 11:13
proposals 84:6 120:12
 154:7 183:22
propose 74:6
proposed 57:3 111:14
 113:7,22 114:8
 118:13,17 120:3
 123:14 125:18 136:10
 163:3 174:22
proposing 65:8 113:20
protest 103:6
protests 25:12
proud 94:4
provide 3:10,13,18 7:10
 41:7 115:19 118:8
 123:7,19 126:2 144:2
 144:4 157:21 160:12
 174:15 178:18 179:11
provided 47:16 66:19
 159:10 166:19
provider 159:6
providers 62:13 159:18
 160:22
provides 46:3 112:13
 116:7 121:16 127:7
providing 82:21 173:16
provision 178:18
 180:13
proximate 177:13
proximity 90:6 108:10
 121:9 127:17 180:1
public 31:5 62:10 100:7
pull 52:22
pulling 53:22
purpose 175:20
purpose-built 13:1,14
 14:4
purposes 3:10,16 4:5
 9:7 41:12 66:5 173:2
purposes/H.R.2290
 3:13
pursue 69:16 70:6
pursuit 99:20 103:8
put 15:4 36:19 60:22
 65:10 80:18 90:6 99:8
 150:20 181:13
puts 60:19
puzzle 34:10

Q

qua 76:17
quadrant 146:15
qualifications 9:9
quarter 74:7
question 17:16 23:11
 49:10 51:13 52:15
 58:7 60:4 63:4 65:4
 85:6 89:14 102:9
 136:11 140:6 141:8
 149:10 181:1
questions 22:3,15
 46:19 77:15 79:8,13
 135:11,12 138:4
 141:1 153:15 161:8
 161:11 164:1 171:14
 171:17,18 185:21
quick 40:20 42:11 85:6
 165:13
quickly 12:20
Quincy 43:16 44:19
quite 11:7 35:14 55:12
 111:6
quorum 51:3
quote 75:22 76:2 134:2

R

R 186:21
rail 112:16
raise 168:4
raised 75:6 180:15
raises 58:7
raising 171:2
rank 145:22
rapidly 39:19
ratification 98:15
 103:13
Raya 41:21 66:14 67:7
reach 97:3 185:21
reached 69:18 97:13
reaches 97:8
reactivating 129:21
read 81:12
reading 68:13
ready 43:6 52:13
ready-made 154:20
reaffirm 140:20
Reagan 119:15
real 42:10 128:15
realistic 37:15
realize 171:4
really 18:3 25:21 29:5
 29:22 32:6 36:4 43:9
 45:7,18 52:5 56:21
 58:15 59:22 74:9
 76:21 89:2 90:22 91:5
 92:9 105:1 109:20
 110:17,21 114:19

117:10 124:9 129:20
 129:21 130:11 131:1
 131:2,10,13,13,14,20
 131:20 132:13,17
 133:16 139:17,18,22
 143:22 144:3,5,9
 145:9,13 146:22
 147:1,5,9 149:22
 151:18 154:7 155:6,8
 160:1 163:18 176:13
 176:14 177:19 180:11
 185:2,3
reason 23:17 25:20
 57:12,14 150:2
reasonable 63:9
reasonably 62:12
reasons 11:19 21:1
 25:20 56:20 148:12
 155:1
reauthorization 61:15
 165:11
reauthorize 3:9
reauthorizes 18:19
reauthorizing 64:19
rebellion 101:22 102:3
rebuilding 173:10
recall 154:7
received 8:12 47:17
 67:2 120:4 130:10
 170:15
receptive 56:11,17
 57:13
recipient 26:17
recipients 20:5 27:8,11
recognition 45:3
 101:11 160:22
recognize 81:8 150:18
recognized 26:19 83:19
 97:6,12 169:14
recognizes 45:22
recommend 129:3
recommendation 85:8
 97:15 156:18
recommendations 10:4
 38:19
recommended 94:13
 96:19
record 15:16 22:21
 36:19 165:17 172:10
 186:5 187:3
recorded 187:1
records 71:16
recreation 110:5 111:5
 112:11 116:15 117:17
 128:12 140:10
recreational 25:14
red 113:22 122:12
rededicated 168:17

reference 78:14
referenced 9:12 107:9
references 90:17
referred 8:7 9:13 19:5
 20:8 30:22 41:15,19
 158:6 166:17
refined 74:8
reflect 14:7 26:22 75:6
 100:10 105:7 133:16
reflected 133:3,7
Reflecting 116:4
reflection 75:3
reflects 125:2,11
refrain 178:12
reframe 89:8
reframing 88:21 92:5
regarding 7:17
regional 34:13
rehabilitated 136:16
rehabilitation 127:21
 139:21 170:10
reinforced 127:15
reinstated 174:2,5
reintroduced 19:21
 21:21 32:13 73:1
reinvigorate 57:22
reiterate 37:6 80:10
rejoin 46:22
rejuvenate 132:13
relate 83:16
related 59:18 65:20
 171:9 173:21 187:4
relates 84:4
relative 78:20 110:15
 141:14 187:7
relatively 74:3
relief 81:3 169:1
relocate 35:2
relocated 120:16
relocation 125:19
 127:20
reluctance 84:22
reluctant 27:16
remain 76:9 96:15
 113:14
remains 22:4 76:5
remark 79:13
remarks 138:5,7
remember 31:13 54:17
 54:22 82:2 101:17
remembered 15:15
remind 42:15 85:7
reminded 16:1
remiss 6:19
removed 110:4
renaming 119:16
renowned 105:22
reopened 66:4

repeat 39:5 184:22
rephrase 17:12
replace 121:19
replaced 136:16
report 9:19 38:11
Reporter 187:17
reports 141:12
represent 27:10 74:19
representative 8:5 9:13
 18:12 19:3,6 20:11
 30:20 40:22 41:18
 72:22,22 79:3 158:4
represented 26:15
 27:14 45:7 80:22
 99:15 100:19
representing 1:12,13
 1:14,15,16,18,19,20
 5:10,13,19,21 6:1,3,5
 6:7 113:6
represents 22:5 25:6
 111:21
Republic 101:2 102:6,7
 119:19 133:15
request 171:6
requested 23:21
requests 25:5
require 52:9 64:20 88:2
 89:16 127:19
required 7:6 10:3 14:11
 98:8 145:21
requirement 179:8
requirements 109:20
 160:10
requires 7:15 38:18
requiring 86:2 89:15
research 68:8 69:11
 71:6 160:14,16
reserve 19:2 21:1 23:13
 23:17,18,22 24:3,12
 24:16 25:6 27:18 29:9
 30:17 31:12,20 36:14
 46:4 48:11,15 49:4
 51:7 60:14,20 62:5
 63:16,20 64:20 72:16
 78:17 80:11 83:13
 84:3,19 86:2 87:17
 94:10 96:20 98:10,18
 98:20 109:7,9 140:21
 140:22 150:2 174:18
 175:21 177:3,6,11
 178:2,5,8,8,19 180:13
reserved 24:13
resident 46:7
resilience 103:22
resistant 12:6
resounding 132:5
Resources 8:8 9:14
 19:5 20:9 31:2 41:16

41:20 132:8 158:7
 166:18
respect 20:22 154:3,17
 183:22
response 178:6
responsibility 95:17
responsible 70:12
rest 80:13 139:1
restaurant 137:2
restructuring 35:3
result 109:5 114:14
retelling 88:22
retired 31:16
returning 174:1
reuse 32:3
reused 13:3 14:8
revenue 128:13
revere 106:1
review 18:13 30:4 38:1
 66:20 107:4 170:7
 186:1
reviewed 170:5
revitalization 14:10
revitalize 14:5 130:14
 130:15,16
revoked 173:21
Revolution 44:8,10,11
 104:20 122:13
Revolutionary 102:9
Richard 158:5
richer 132:20 155:16
right 15:3,7 17:14 18:9
 18:15,15,16 23:12
 32:11 34:21 36:9 38:2
 41:4 42:11,14 43:1
 47:2 50:8,12 52:14
 54:15 59:4 60:9 66:22
 78:11 80:18 83:11,11
 88:19 89:1 93:16 96:6
 97:8,11 100:6,8
 101:10,13 102:10
 104:8,21 105:7
 106:12,14,15 118:13
 129:15 130:16,20
 132:10 136:18 139:3
 140:15 143:8 146:15
 146:18 147:2,6,19
 151:19 154:21 157:9
 159:4 161:21 162:1
 163:4,20,21 165:6
 166:3 180:18 183:3
rights 94:22 103:10,15
 103:17
ring 120:9 123:20
risen 138:12
riveted 81:17
road 12:20
roads 145:4

roadway 57:20 110:3
role 44:6 103:19 106:1
 106:3 116:10 171:1
roles 74:20
rolled 81:17
Roosevelt 81:11,13
rooted 73:21
Rosie 72:3 75:19
Rosies 68:14 69:5 75:8
 75:15,21 76:6 77:9
 87:1,12
Rosies' 76:9
rotate 182:19
rotating 175:5 182:10
rotunda 94:19
Rugby 109:22
run 38:7 39:19
running 68:10
Rushmore 184:20

S

S.1088 3:10 41:6 67:14
 72:14
S.1353 4:1 166:11
 167:22 171:7
sacrifice 3:11,14 20:4
 41:8 72:9 73:12
sacrifices 105:9
safe 106:11
safer 149:9
safety 108:3,4,5 160:12
sake 39:6
Sale 93:12 95:8 107:3
 135:12,22 136:7
 138:14 144:15,17
 156:14
Sarah 1:13 5:19
sat 102:18
Sates' 174:8
satisfies 177:18,19
saying 15:10 24:4 83:3
 131:11 184:13 185:11
says 53:6 60:8 136:21
 177:3,12
scale 15:20 26:3,3
 60:22 75:9 78:20
 176:11
Scandinavian 11:11
Scandinavians 11:10
scared 33:15
scattered 62:21
schedule 33:13
scheduled 9:17
school 67:19 74:17
scope 92:6 125:8
Scouts 62:13
screen 66:22
sculpture 174:9 178:4

sec 111:5
second 4:1 18:17 43:20
 54:4 92:18 98:16
 142:1 150:14 157:17
 166:4,10,13,21
 167:15,18 168:1,6,11
 169:5,12,16 173:12
 173:15 177:22
secretary 2:1 6:3 7:6
 51:15 177:4 178:13
section 51:14 131:16
secure 69:6
securing 103:20
security 55:13 65:15
 66:5,7 108:3
see 8:17 12:16 19:13
 28:4 34:17 38:2 54:12
 54:13 59:13 61:22
 78:11 81:6 87:11 88:7
 92:1 100:11 104:18
 107:6 111:7,13
 112:17 116:14 123:3
 123:14 124:8 130:20
 133:3,6,13 156:15,19
 156:21 167:11 185:14
seeds 101:1,14
seeing 8:20 9:1 15:8
 17:9 32:10 40:18 41:2
 46:21 69:15
seek 106:21
seeking 72:13
seen 11:12 39:1 55:8,9
sees 99:14
segments 84:8,13
seismic 159:20
selected 182:14
selection 3:17 7:20
 13:12 31:21 32:21
 50:15 54:18 59:3,7,16
 59:21 60:12,18 71:2
 73:7,17 92:20 93:2,6
 95:8 96:10 107:2,5
 108:20 141:10 160:6
 164:21
self-evident 102:13,21
self-governance
 102:11
selfless 20:3
Senate 9:17 19:17,20
 20:6,8,13 21:20 22:1
 24:1,21 41:13,15
 132:17
Senator 20:7 22:20
 41:14 166:15,19
Senators 72:21
sense 78:21 89:11
 175:17
sent 8:11 22:21 50:16
 80:20
sentiment 102:15
Sentiments 102:17
 121:6
separate 30:17,18
 52:15 84:11 86:13
 87:5 88:2,6
separated 30:9
separation 128:14
September 164:19
 172:5
sequential 125:17
series 126:11,19
 155:14
seriously 27:1 37:13
 69:17
serve 5:8 45:15 70:10
 114:19 136:22 148:15
 148:19 160:21
served 44:17 68:16
 72:2,7 94:4 167:18
 168:11
serves 116:15
service 1:1,13 3:11,14
 5:11 20:4 26:14 27:9
 27:13,17 41:8 45:6
 69:19 70:3 72:9 73:11
 75:21 76:2 80:22 81:4
 81:9 83:18 84:10,13
 115:21 147:15,22
 148:2 169:13 171:19
Service's 118:17
 137:12
services 1:20 3:19 6:2
 7:8 24:10 81:14,22
 108:13 157:20 158:1
 163:5
serving 76:12 169:17
 169:18,19 175:11
sesquicentennial
 182:17
set 21:4 50:4 103:5
 169:21 173:19
sets 157:2
setting 56:16 91:2
 114:20 115:16 118:7
 121:16 123:8,17
seven 165:4
seven-year 51:16
shaft 168:21
Shaheen 41:14 72:21
shape 74:15 100:11
 152:16,20
shaped 99:19
shapes 176:9
shaping 106:2
share 18:13 30:2 32:18
 53:20,20 74:10 79:15

95:10,18 129:16
 130:8 131:5 133:21
 185:12
shared 27:12 32:19
 77:18 146:10
Sharpie 69:14
shells 81:18
Sherman 61:8
ship 44:21
ships 68:20 81:17
shipyards 75:20
shirt 102:2
Shogan 93:8,10,19,22
 94:1 96:5,15
short 74:13
shortly 6:4
shoulder 105:21,21
show 43:14 113:4
 138:22 147:2 156:21
 165:15 172:8,10
showing 155:12
shows 78:16 81:20,21
 82:4,5 110:8 149:22
shut 66:4,4 159:22,22
side 19:1 86:17 106:15
 106:15 117:16 120:21
 123:21 136:9 137:7,7
 137:10,11 151:8
 154:18,19 155:1,5
Sigma 104:21
sign 18:14
signed 31:4 95:20
 158:10 173:11,14
Signers 117:5 119:11
 121:10 122:8 125:6
 155:9
significance 74:1 88:20
 95:4 127:16 160:19
significant 12:3 62:12
 71:5 116:10 124:9
 168:19 177:16 183:18
signing 119:14
siloed 39:17
silver 69:13
similar 32:21 38:21
 90:7,7 124:16 128:2
Similarly 111:2
simply 62:18 134:19
 161:3 181:21
sine 76:17
single 68:15 103:14
 125:10 134:11
singular 124:22 126:21
 175:20
sir 12:15 46:21
sisters 171:12
sit 75:5,6
site 3:17 7:17,19 13:11

13:12 23:22 31:21
 32:21 33:13 34:2,5
 36:3,14,14 46:9 49:5
 50:14 54:7,16,18 55:3
 55:11,19 56:18 59:1,3
 59:6,7,9,9,15,16,18
 59:20,21 60:6,11,12
 60:18,19,20 61:17
 64:21 65:13 71:2 73:7
 73:17,18 83:12 92:20
 93:1,6 95:8,11 96:10
 98:21 107:1,4,13
 108:7,8,20 109:17,19
 111:13,19 113:5
 114:3,3,6,16,18 115:2
 115:9 116:2,15
 117:14,18,20,21
 118:9 120:10,21
 122:18,18 123:1,5
 124:13,20 125:8,10
 125:20 128:6 140:4
 141:9 142:8,14 143:3
 143:4,5,9 144:19
 145:9,14 146:6,8
 147:4,9,16,21 148:10
 149:6,6,8 150:7,13,19
 151:16 152:15 153:8
 154:4,5,16 156:4,17
 156:21 157:4 160:5
 160:13 164:21 175:17
 177:15 181:10 182:14
site's 160:18
sited 152:11
sites 33:4 40:14 50:16
 63:13,18 65:8 72:4
 78:4 100:14 107:7
 108:22 109:1,6,6,11
 110:8,13 111:8,15
 119:21 121:22 126:15
 127:3 141:3,9,22
 142:11 143:20 150:1
 151:19 154:2 157:5
 162:4 164:10 175:12
 179:4
siting 30:16 48:10
 80:11
sits 36:8
sitting 138:9
situates 121:12
situation 37:6
sixth 44:19
size 62:22 74:4 110:15
sizes 176:4,8
skip 48:12
slaves 44:21
slice 10:17
sliced 11:14
slide 78:4 79:6 98:12

99:3,22 100:18 102:6
 103:1 104:8 105:5
 107:4 108:16,18,19
 109:10 110:7 111:7
 111:12,18 112:4,17
 113:4,18 114:2 115:4
 116:1,6,13,21 117:13
 118:3,20 119:5,20
 120:2,11,22 121:21
 122:6,17 123:2,13,22
 124:7,15,20 125:13
 126:4,13,16 127:1
 129:3 130:7 131:17
 131:22 132:7,16,22
 133:5,12,19 136:3
slides 66:20 97:18,20
 136:8
slightly 71:10 124:21
 128:2
slipped 45:11
slopes 119:1 155:6
small 22:8 26:7 46:4
 62:17 74:3 75:12 79:2
 96:18
smaller 26:4 78:6
 175:20
Smithsonian 3:6,7 10:2
 30:11,13 31:14 33:1
 36:9 38:17 112:16
 113:17 143:19
soldiers 26:18 168:11
 169:16
somebody 29:5
someday 134:4
somewhat 23:15 90:10
son 44:19 45:1
sons 81:14
soon 34:14,20 70:7
sorry 9:2,3 22:13 42:5
 42:11 49:6 65:5,5
 66:17 85:4 93:3,5
 144:16 166:6 185:12
sort 17:6,12 25:21 26:8
 29:18 32:7 33:2,7
 34:21 35:3 39:5,11
 50:18 57:4 59:13,20
 63:5,17,21 65:12
 78:12 86:17 88:18
 89:7 90:7,17 114:4,16
 137:1,20 141:12,20
 142:6,17 148:19
 150:8 152:3,5,11
 154:20 157:2 175:20
 181:13,16
sorts 147:7
sought 70:5
sound 18:9 29:22
 185:10

sounds 175:18
source 138:16
south 15:5 16:12 17:2
 46:5 111:11,20 112:5
 112:20 115:21 116:4
 119:4 126:21 128:16
 139:4 167:19 184:20
southeast 122:2
southwest 37:10
 111:22 125:20
space 11:19 18:1 25:6
 25:11,12,14,14,15
 28:5 35:5 39:19 57:22
 62:10,16,22 73:21
 74:7 75:3 110:1
 112:12 116:15 119:17
 120:10 129:22 130:6
 133:1,13 136:13
 147:11,12 152:9,9,19
 154:10,17,19 175:17
 176:1 185:3
space-making 145:12
spaces 155:14
spans 100:19
spare 185:19
speak 8:17 13:5 21:8
 33:10,19 43:4 68:5
 69:2 77:19 147:20
 148:8 159:9
speaker 21:5 93:18
speaking 23:6 31:6
 108:22
speaks 135:5
special 91:4 104:14
specific 10:18 11:6
 39:11 59:8,9 61:17
 64:21
specifically 49:5 73:18
 98:9 117:11 169:15
 174:18,18
specifics 47:13
specified 60:5
specifies 53:3
specifying 12:6 52:18
 63:9
speculative 176:14
spend 100:1
spent 68:13 98:5 132:3
spoil 62:16
spoke 38:22 132:22
 133:5,13
spoken 141:2
sponsor 8:10 15:21
 70:10 83:7 89:6
sponsors 7:15 37:12,13
 132:16
sporadic 170:16
spot 5:4 63:10 86:21

spread 184:17
spring 113:1
spur 20:17
square 109:18 181:17
St 45:2
Stables 116:20 118:19
stack 145:22
staff 44:18 53:22 101:7
stairs 122:21 136:14
 137:4
stand 149:1
standing 105:21 142:17
stands 103:11 134:12
star 113:6 169:6
start 7:22 8:22 10:9,9
 11:5 25:16 34:17
 39:17 57:21 84:7
 101:15 134:16 144:14
 182:15
started 7:2 8:14 93:15
 155:19
starting 10:17 85:16
starts 84:8
state 68:15 163:14
 177:5
statement 22:21
states 1:1 3:12,15
 39:16 41:10 43:21
 44:20 45:4 73:10 94:5
 94:17 99:16 116:19
 134:6 168:12 169:13
 174:18 182:11
station 112:16 118:15
 118:17 120:15,16
 125:19,22 137:13,15
 137:16 142:22
stations 118:1,11
statistics 149:12
statue 55:2 58:17,20
 61:7 176:12
statues 55:6 62:18
 173:17 175:18 176:4
 180:4 181:3,6,10,20
statute 60:5 85:1
 176:22
statutes 174:10
steady 17:8
step 70:8 82:16
stepped 68:5
stewardship 96:3
Stidham 1:10,12 5:3,8
 5:18 6:16,19 10:10
 12:8,15 13:20 14:17
 15:12 16:4,17 17:11
 19:12 21:12 22:13
 23:1 24:19 26:9 28:19
 29:16 33:17 35:16
 36:22 37:17 40:1,4,18

41:4 42:5,9,14,18
 43:5 46:17 47:4,7,11
 49:12,14 50:2,9,13
 51:9 52:3,22 53:7,9
 53:19 54:5,9 56:1
 58:3 59:4,12 60:7,15
 60:17 61:2,4,9,12,19
 64:2,13,17 65:1,5,19
 66:16 67:1 77:16,22
 79:5,8 80:4,7 82:11
 82:15 85:2,12,20,22
 86:5 88:11 89:13
 91:14 92:12 93:10,13
 135:8 136:19 137:10
 138:1 139:13 140:7
 140:11,16 147:17
 148:9 149:14 151:10
 153:13 156:8,12
 157:9 158:18,22
 161:10 164:1,12,14
 165:6,8,12 166:2
 167:6,10 171:15,20
 172:1,18 175:7,10
 176:3,18 178:11,15
 178:20 179:3 180:19
 181:12 182:1,6,21
 183:4 184:21
stoked 81:15
stone 90:18
stoplight 145:16,17
stops 134:16
stories 76:13 77:10
 87:3 90:14,16,19,20
 133:9
story 11:21 72:11 76:22
 89:1,2,8 91:5 92:2,11
 95:4 99:13 100:16
 101:12 105:19 106:5
 112:5 129:8 132:20
 135:2 155:16,20
storytelling 107:18
straight 57:2
strange 176:22
strategic 127:8
street 15:8,19 18:8 33:6
 36:9 55:14 109:1
 110:3 117:9 121:15
 124:5,19 127:17
 139:9 168:7
streets 147:6
streetscape 26:4
strength 74:20
strict 51:18
strong 26:13 56:22 72:5
 87:13 88:8 127:5
 128:17 155:11
stronger 162:18
strongest 71:7 115:15

142:15 160:9 162:3
 163:6
strongly 36:2 73:21
structures 128:8
struggling 86:8
stuck 142:22
student 78:20
studies 111:13
study 3:2,8 8:2 9:5 12:5
 16:15 17:15 18:6
 31:22 38:4,9
stuff 96:7,8
stuffing 33:3
styled 15:17
subject 99:1
submit 9:19 30:4
submitted 29:20 159:12
sudden 11:15
suffering 184:16
sufficiently 28:17
suffrage 3:17 7:20
 92:21 94:3 99:6 101:1
 101:12,14 103:3,5,11
 105:19 114:6 116:11
 121:2,7 127:10 129:4
 130:3 132:14
suffrage's 103:21
suffragist 104:5
suffragists 104:11
suggest 13:18 63:6,8
suggested 27:19 65:21
 156:9 184:4
suggesting 151:5
suggests 164:10
suitability 107:8 109:16
suitable 154:2 184:4
Sullivan 1:19 5:13,17
 14:18,19 16:22 28:22
 29:1 35:18,19 61:12
 61:13 85:3,4 86:3
 139:15,16 140:14
 175:2,3,9 176:18
 182:8,9 183:2
Sullivan's 16:10 183:8
sum 131:12
summarize 29:19
summarized 31:9
summary 52:15
Suozi 8:6 9:13
superb 36:11
supply 14:9
support 3:12,15 6:21
 24:15 41:9 66:19
 67:13 70:21 71:16
 72:14 84:2,22 94:9
 96:16 108:10,13
 112:15 130:9 135:2
 156:19 165:10,15

171:7 172:11,17
 182:10
supported 36:1 140:1
supporting 77:8 172:8
supportive 29:11 61:14
suppose 101:18
supposed 164:8
Supreme 44:22
sure 11:20 17:13 18:16
 24:5,18 30:3,20 35:14
 36:17 40:22 42:8
 55:20 64:4 65:15
 66:12 77:17 82:8 87:4
 96:21 149:11 162:5
 170:21 175:22 177:17
 177:19 182:4,7
 183:19 184:22
surroundings 100:15
Survey 112:21 114:15
 115:10,20
surveys 160:15
Susan 134:2,16 135:4
swaths 11:3
swift 75:13
swirling 34:21
switch 42:10
sword 44:9 169:3
sword's 169:7
Sylvan 112:13 113:21
 114:9
symbol 95:3
symbolically 169:3
symbolizes 74:15
Syracuse 160:17

T

T 186:21,21
table 151:4
tables 141:11
take 26:22 32:4 56:13
 66:13 77:14 80:8
 97:19 104:15 152:16
 161:8 165:13 174:16
 185:19
taken 37:7 100:13
 123:3 124:21 187:6
takes 148:18
talk 57:5 77:4 91:21
 107:10,16 130:2
 157:6 175:4 183:21
talked 75:18 107:14
 123:12 175:19 184:2
talking 11:15 36:18
 43:15 46:16 146:22
 154:4 155:16 179:20
 185:3
talks 177:1
tall 74:14 169:3

Tammy 1:10,12 5:8
 21:19 135:6
tanks 68:20 81:17
targeted 11:11 28:17
task 4:3 103:18 172:22
tasks 71:15
Taylor 168:18
teacher 67:20 69:14
team 45:17 130:1
technical 6:21
tell 28:9 46:22 77:10
 90:13 92:1 95:22
 97:10 100:15 106:5
 155:15,20
telling 11:21 89:8
 132:20 155:16
temporary 71:14 91:4
 128:8 175:4
tenant 163:2
tend 55:6 126:21
tenure 94:16
term 136:20
terms 25:6 52:6 108:4
 110:5 135:22 146:18
testified 21:18
testify 42:2 67:13,16
 70:20 77:4 158:10
 167:1
testifying 79:14
testimonies 8:16 47:19
testimony 8:11 47:16
 67:4 78:5 90:15 159:3
 159:12 166:20
Texas 184:6,7
text 78:15
thank 5:17 6:14,16,18
 6:20 10:10 12:8,15
 13:20,22 14:17,19
 15:12 16:4,7 22:17,19
 22:22 23:1,1 26:9
 28:19 29:16 32:16
 33:17 35:16 36:22
 37:17 40:1,19 42:13
 42:18,21 43:2 46:14
 46:17 47:3,4,7 53:17
 56:1 58:3 61:19 64:2
 64:4,13 65:1 67:5,15
 77:3,7,9,14,16 79:10
 79:14 80:2,4,6 82:11
 82:20 85:2,20,20 86:3
 86:5 88:13 89:19,21
 91:14 92:12,13 93:17
 93:21 94:8 96:2,4,5
 97:16,21 131:6
 133:20,22 135:1,7,8
 137:21 138:2,13
 139:13,16 140:15,16
 140:18 149:14,17

151:9,10 153:13
 156:13 157:10 158:22
 159:8 161:10,13,14
 163:22 165:19,21,22
 167:10,12,21 171:13
 171:15,19,20 172:13
 172:15 176:16 178:11
 180:19 182:21 185:16
 186:2
thanks 12:12 14:16
 15:11 47:10 61:21
 93:22 140:19
Theater 112:13 113:21
 114:9
thematic 71:7 107:13
 109:16,19 110:22
 111:6 113:5 115:15
 116:22 123:12 127:5
 128:3 129:7 160:9
 161:22 162:3,18
 163:6 164:11
thematically 95:13
themes 104:10 105:4
 105:16 107:14
then-General 76:14
theorize 162:13
Theta 104:21
thin 10:18
thing 36:12 52:3 58:1
 64:16 77:11 91:8,19
 96:12,18 116:16
 131:4 143:8 146:1
 147:13 150:11 155:22
 181:1,4,16
things 25:10 27:5 46:16
 50:18 55:7 62:14,19
 62:20 90:21 91:3
 109:15 114:4 129:17
 147:3,7 150:19
 157:12,13 174:21
 176:22 177:2,13
think 5:3 11:12,17,22
 12:21 20:15,15 21:2,5
 22:4 24:16,22 25:3,18
 27:4,6 28:13,16 29:14
 29:15,18 31:8 32:10
 33:14,21 34:7,16 35:6
 35:9 36:15 37:12 39:6
 39:9,17,18,20 43:13
 43:19 57:11,12,22
 58:19 59:17 61:6
 62:16 63:4,5,11,14
 64:11 66:2,9 75:16
 80:12,19 82:4 83:7
 84:15,16,20 85:4 86:9
 86:22 87:8 88:10,17
 88:21 89:4,7,11 90:3
 91:1,7,11,13,22 92:4

92:5 97:8 100:3
 104:17 110:19 112:6
 114:21 131:10,13
 134:6,7,19 136:8
 139:2,5,6,9 140:3
 141:3,6 142:4,13,14
 143:1,20 144:15,17
 145:13 146:1,4 147:8
 147:9,11 149:2 150:4
 150:8,15,20 151:4,7
 152:1,7,13,14,15
 153:6 155:1,10,15
 161:14 162:22 165:1
 165:13 178:1,4,6
 180:15 181:5 182:1,4
 182:5,15,18 183:2,5,8
 184:8
thinking 18:3 25:5
 40:13 74:11 91:19
 130:13 132:3 176:2
third 19:13 82:5
Thomas 8:6 44:3
 112:21 113:11,13
Thompson 166:21
 167:3,9,12,14 171:16
 171:17,19 172:13,15
thoroughly 32:1
thought 62:1 85:8
 101:4,7 102:15
 144:18 163:8,13
 177:8 183:10
thoughtful 92:9,13
thoughts 63:22 144:11
 153:10 183:6
three 81:3,19 93:3
 125:9 157:1,5,12,13
 177:12
thrilled 70:19
thumb 60:22
Tidal 110:11,11,13
tightly 155:18
time 20:18 27:6 29:7,21
 30:6 32:3,19 33:5
 35:20 38:1 41:3 44:12
 45:14 49:2 51:1 59:8
 64:11 68:2 75:17
 76:22 85:11 87:2,16
 96:22 100:1 102:20
 132:3 154:6 161:4
 163:4,10 164:20
 165:20 168:3 169:22
 171:2 172:5 181:7,11
 181:14 185:17 186:2
timeline 165:16
timelines 34:22 127:22
times 65:16 66:5 130:2
titled 53:13 174:3
titles 74:22

today 7:4,18 8:11,13,14
 15:11 19:10 23:21
 25:21 29:7 30:4 34:4
 39:5 42:1 43:3 52:8
 67:13 76:19 80:5
 91:21 93:18 94:8 95:6
 95:22 98:19 101:3
 104:18,22 105:2
 133:21 134:12 157:5
 158:8 165:20 166:22
 167:22 172:21 185:17
 186:3
today's 5:12 6:21 76:10
told 70:3 75:20 117:11
top 96:7 111:8 118:13
 123:15 126:10 137:5
 153:5
topic 32:9
totality 25:5
tough 150:7
tourist 184:15
tourists 184:16
town 14:10
track 178:7
traffic 106:14 108:5
 146:22
transcribed 187:1
transcript 186:22 187:2
transform 142:21
transformational 153:8
transformational 110:2
 142:2,3 144:5
transformed 142:9,12
transit 108:10 112:15
trash 6:13
travel 183:13 185:9
traveled 69:2
traveling 184:11
treated 149:7
treatments 128:18
tree 119:1
trees 136:15
tremendous 45:13
trend 32:10
triangle 54:14
triangular 55:10
tribute 72:1 104:4
 119:18 171:11
troops 68:22
trouble 22:14
true 58:9 106:18 131:13
 187:3
Truly 75:2
Trump 95:20 97:5 173:8
 174:2
trumps 59:20
Trust 113:19 120:3
 121:18 127:9,11

129:19 130:10,21
 131:6 139:19
Trust's 135:19
truth 102:12
truths 102:20
try 19:9,11 28:13
 145:22 171:14 181:19
trying 14:5 19:9 35:4
 48:4 54:13 57:19
 117:22 130:3 160:2
 175:16 180:22 181:16
tucked 137:20
Tunstall 1:20 5:22
 16:17,19 33:9,18 36:5
 39:3,4 64:15,18 91:15
 91:16 151:12,13
 154:15 175:14,15
 176:16
turf 111:22 116:5
turn 129:13 145:5 167:7
TV 43:14
two 30:6,7,17,18 31:3,6
 31:9,10 34:17 52:5
 56:20 78:6 92:17 93:2
 93:4 112:22 118:1
 119:21 136:8 138:5
 168:17,22 169:21
 173:7 177:20
two-acre 114:16 117:21
 118:9 122:18
two-year 160:1
tying 98:14
type 13:18 79:3 83:1
 105:10,10 142:7
 148:17
types 108:5

U

U.S. 118:18 119:14
 121:2,13
ultimate 73:19 75:7
ultimately 70:12
unanimously 165:18
unanimously 21:22
unauthorized 7:16
unaware 76:9
underscore 15:1 16:10
 35:20 36:7
understand 25:2,19
 58:12,15 127:12
 136:10,12,17 152:22
understanding 59:2
 60:10 99:18 156:16
 164:4 181:13
understood 24:3
 104:11 179:8
underutilized 18:4
uniform 76:16

uninterrupted 127:18
union 68:15
unique 27:10
United 1:1 3:12,15
 39:16 41:10 43:20
 44:20 94:5,17 99:16
 116:19 134:5 168:12
 169:13 174:7 182:11
universe 108:21
University 160:17
unobtrusive 74:4
unofficial 44:18 101:7
 101:10
unstable 135:17
unveiled 119:12
update 30:2 37:19
 185:18
updates 47:21
uplifting 130:5
upper 79:1
upshot 53:3
urban 34:19 179:15
urge 171:5
urged 32:22
use 14:10 24:6 34:8
 49:2 90:20 128:7,12
 138:19 147:16 152:5
 152:15 154:18 155:15
 182:22
uses 25:8 32:4
Usually 57:18
utility 150:19

V

V 74:15 75:6
vacant 18:4
vacated 76:1
valid 39:14
valor 20:3
value 63:12 141:14
values 26:14 27:9 45:8
variety 11:19 90:20
 107:7 109:11 127:5
 148:12 175:12 176:4
 176:8 179:4,4
various 14:7 33:15 55:2
 62:14 63:17 111:13
 142:11 155:12
vast 26:4 177:22 178:1
vegetated 137:4
verify 53:10
version 21:3 41:13
versus 156:18
vests 69:4
veterans 69:1 76:10
 87:8,18 122:15
Veterans' 72:1
viability 39:20

Vice 158:9
victory 69:7 74:16
 103:12
Videoconference 1:10
Vietnam 71:21,22 87:8
 117:7 122:9,14 155:7
view 62:3 75:13 111:16
 112:19,20 113:13
 114:12 122:15
viewed 184:9
views 7:11 55:16
 116:14,17 124:10
 128:10
viewshed 65:14
Virginia 20:7
visibility 116:7
visible 86:12 103:19
 117:1,4 122:12
 128:17
vision 79:15 80:1 152:2
visit 106:11 146:19
visited 99:16
visitor 28:5 55:12
 108:14
visitors 75:5 106:1,19
 109:21 125:14 134:18
visits 99:14 133:2
visual 113:15 123:11
 136:4
vital 75:14
vitality 14:14
voice 44:11
void 57:16
vote 165:13
voted 172:11
voting 103:10,15

W

WACs 82:1
waiting 54:2 61:22
 101:11
walk 57:19 67:3 77:17
 78:2 96:9
walked 83:14
walking 72:4,16 83:15
want 11:8,20 12:21
 14:21 16:9 29:2,12
 35:20 36:7 61:14 63:5
 65:10,12 80:18 83:8
 83:17 89:6 93:14
 106:16,17 107:16
 118:12 138:10 143:2
 144:13 148:8 150:9
 153:21 154:11 179:22
 185:16
wanted 15:15 21:8
 32:18 36:19 51:12
 64:6 66:20 77:17

79:13 82:8 96:13
 104:10 114:11 115:19
 117:15 129:16 130:7
 131:5,6 138:5 144:22
 156:15 182:9
wants 75:21 180:1
war 3:12,15 22:7 41:11
 41:22,22 44:13,15
 45:3 67:8,12,13 68:4
 68:12,20 70:16 71:8,9
 71:11,17 72:5,7,10,12
 72:17 73:9,13 74:18
 74:21 75:1 76:5,20
 77:1 78:7 80:22 81:1
 81:5,9 82:6,9 83:2,13
 84:12,13 86:9,15,16
 87:2,6,18 88:1,6
 89:15 90:1 102:9
 105:9 112:19 115:2
 116:9,18 117:2,8
 118:6 128:11 143:1
 155:2,3 168:15,19,20
warn 135:15
Washington 11:16 12:7
 15:18 16:1 17:16
 38:13 40:11 44:6,9
 45:10 57:3 67:22
 70:17 86:19 91:10
 98:9 111:11,19 112:1
 112:2,4,7,8,12,18
 113:1,8 115:12 116:8
 116:14 117:1 118:5
 122:2,8 124:11
 126:20 128:10,16,22
 129:12 139:4 143:12
 146:12,17 151:1
 152:18 154:5,8 168:8
 177:17 182:13 183:17
 184:1,9
Washington's 107:17
wasn't 42:8 77:16 83:18
 117:15 158:20
watch 155:22
watched 68:3
watching 17:7 19:11
 104:17
water 120:8
waterfront 121:16
WAVES 82:1
way 32:13 33:1 52:2,15
 57:4 58:21 86:15 87:5
 87:14 88:8 90:9 91:5
 91:9 92:1 97:22
 100:22 101:4,5,15
 120:8 134:22 136:4
 138:11 145:21 149:5
 149:6,6,8 150:21
 151:21 152:4,11

182:22
ways 176:6 179:14
we'll 18:12 34:17 41:5
 42:11 48:12 66:12
 93:2,6,21 103:1
 157:12 170:20 185:11
 185:22
we're 5:3 10:17 13:15
 15:8 21:16 25:1 30:5
 35:14 39:5,18 42:10
 43:15 45:17 54:2
 58:22 64:10 65:7
 72:13 93:1 99:1 104:9
 118:20 119:20 130:2
 145:12 146:3,22
 157:13 159:15,18
 161:6,7 163:14 164:5
 164:15 166:3
we've 10:20 11:12
 17:13 22:12 45:9,10
 45:14 46:8 56:19 84:5
 101:2 106:9 114:18
 118:14 123:3 124:21
 125:9 126:1 130:21
 131:8,19 149:19
 160:5,14 175:19
 185:2
wealth 184:17,18
weave 129:6
weaves 99:11
Weaving 105:17
weigh 24:18 164:5,15
weighing 24:5 58:22
weight 147:3
weighted 146:3
weird 54:11
welcome 5:5,15 6:17
 66:16 166:2
welded 81:17
welder 75:19
went 69:9 146:8 186:5
weren't 31:17 138:9
west 20:7 110:11,12
 111:2,10 112:19
 114:9,13,22 116:2,17
 118:16,18 119:22
 122:3 123:6 124:1,1
 126:7,18 127:4 129:5
 137:7 138:15 139:7
 140:4 141:4 142:12
 150:5 151:7,18 154:1
 154:15,18,22 155:5
 168:20
western 115:19 120:10
 124:12,13 125:3
 126:11 130:22 143:13
wheels 81:16
white 4:3 46:5,7 55:5,14

58:14 113:10,12
122:14 141:17 143:16
172:21
wide 113:13
wife 44:16 46:22
wife's 43:2
wildlife 130:16
Williams 1:20 3:3,4 6:1
16:18,19 19:15,17
33:9,18 36:5 39:3,4
64:14,15,18 91:15,16
151:12,13 175:14,15
176:16
Williams' 154:15
win 68:12 102:10
wings 168:17
wise 91:22
wishes 8:17
woman 94:7 99:14
101:9,10
women 3:11,14 41:9
67:11 68:4,9,11,13,19
69:3,8,12 72:2,10
73:12 75:1 76:1,11,15
77:1,8 79:3,3 80:21
81:4,9,20,21 82:4,5
83:18 84:11 86:22
99:11,18 102:8,13,18
102:19,21 104:4,21
105:14,17 106:1
112:5 133:16 134:9
134:14
women's 3:7,17 7:20
11:1 30:13 31:10 42:1
67:9,14 70:16 71:8,21
73:10 74:20 87:9
90:12 91:21 92:10,21
94:2,10 99:17 101:1
101:12,14 103:2,3
105:19 114:6 116:10
117:7 121:1,7 122:9
127:10 129:4,8 130:3
132:14 133:3 143:21
won 44:22
wonderful 90:16 91:8
182:19
wondering 82:22
wood 69:12
Woods 116:3 118:15
Woody 3:3,4 19:15,17
word 152:6 182:16,22
words 54:21 104:4
work 3:20 20:2 40:20
43:8 71:3,19 72:8
73:17 77:12 79:19
92:10 94:12 95:10
98:7 99:7 101:10
104:12 105:2,3 109:9

111:14 112:11 113:5
127:12 128:21 129:19
130:2,6,14,17,19
131:14,21 133:16,22
134:13 152:8 156:20
158:2 160:16 161:4
164:20 165:13 171:8
179:15 183:19 185:16
workable 142:14
worked 3:11,14 41:9
67:11 68:14 71:13
73:12 75:1,19 76:4
127:11 130:11,21
workforce 69:6,9
working 56:4 68:11
71:1 82:6 104:22
178:13
works 7:5,10,13 20:22
29:12 30:15 34:6 48:9
52:1 70:1 84:4 105:22
142:17 175:1 178:4
179:7

World 3:12,15 41:11,22
41:22 67:8,12,13 68:4
68:12 70:16 71:8,9,10
72:5,7,10,17 73:9,13
74:18 77:1 78:7 80:22
81:1,5,9 82:9 83:2,13
84:12,13 86:9,15 87:6
88:1,6 89:15 90:1
112:19 115:1 142:22
155:2,3 168:15,19
worries 42:13 158:18
worry 106:14 154:10
worth 87:3 150:14
worthwhile 92:5
worthy 64:19 84:16
106:20
wouldn't 65:10 78:1
84:22 88:2,7 117:10
149:12 181:21

wrap 129:15
wreaths 168:22
write 18:11 44:3 66:2
138:10,10 183:20
185:12
writing 8:12
written 47:16 159:12
166:20
WRNs 82:1
wrong 85:16 182:16
wrote 101:5,16 102:19

X

Y

yard 25:9,17 72:12
yards 71:22

yeah 15:14 21:14 22:22
26:12 49:13 51:11
53:7 58:6 60:21 80:17
81:21 85:12 93:16
136:6 140:11 141:19
143:6 145:7 148:9
162:2,3 163:11 165:3
175:3 176:21 180:21
183:21
year 21:18,22 32:14
50:20 69:2 134:18
140:13
years 47:21 49:20
54:18 62:15 69:18
70:14 75:16 76:4 96:1
96:17 98:6,16 100:20
100:21 102:10 131:8
132:1 134:1 165:4
170:17,18
York 8:6
young 133:2 134:7
146:20

Z

Zoning 166:8

0

1

1 23:13 29:14 78:16
80:12 85:9 86:1
1.8 114:17
1.8-acre 115:9
1/2 74:14
1/2-acre 114:18
1:00 1:10
1:04 5:2
1:45 19:10
100 49:20 148:14
100th 75:15
109 75:16
10th 33:6
11 36:8
1102 9:1,4
12 1:6
13934 173:9 177:12
13978 173:13 177:21
13th 30:21
14 186:1
14th 109:1 143:4
151:15 154:3 156:17
156:20 157:4
150-foot 113:13 114:12
150-year 155:20
151 3:20
159 4:2
15th 110:3
165 4:5

17,660 168:10
1776 101:17
17th 168:7
18 3:5 67:11 168:16
18-foot 169:2
1848 102:19
18th 158:5 173:14
1936 168:16 170:13,16
1940 69:8
1940s 71:13
1945 69:8
1961 169:18
1962 168:18 170:14,17
1965 167:19 169:18
1966 167:20
1984 119:10
1986 7:5 119:13
19th 94:18 95:1,3 98:15
102:8 103:4,13 106:6
117:9 121:13,14
124:5,6,8,13,18
125:15 127:16,17
132:5 139:9 142:1
155:18,21

2

2 85:19
2- 74:13
200-year 119:13
2001 49:11
2003 169:19
2009 169:20
2010 169:19
2013 169:20
2016 70:2
2018 169:8
2020 95:20 98:14
173:11
2021 173:14,22
2022 70:18
2025 1:6 5:6 8:5 19:3
20:8 30:21 41:15,19
53:16 72:21 96:1
158:5 166:16 174:3
2026 174:8
2032 48:1,8 49:16
164:19 165:4,5,8
172:5
20th 168:18
215 174:10
2290 41:7,17
23 73:3
24 81:2
244 173:16
24th 19:3 41:15,18
72:20
250 175:18 178:4 180:3
181:2,5