

**H.R. 2109, H.R. 2748, H.R. 3421,  
AND H.R. 3425**

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**LEGISLATIVE HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION,  
AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

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**LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H.R. 2109, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY OF VIRGINIA KEY BEACH, FLORIDA, FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM; H.R. 2748, TO AUTHORIZE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL DATABASE FOR PURPOSES OF IDENTIFYING, LOCATING, AND CATALOGING THE MANY MEMORIALS AND PERMANENT TRIBUTES TO AMERICA'S VETERANS; H.R. 3421, TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SCHOOL FACILITIES WITHIN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES; AND H.R. 3425, TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO STUDY THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING HIGHWAY 49 IN CALIFORNIA, KNOWN AS THE "GOLDEN CHAIN HIGHWAY," AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR.**

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**Thursday, December 13, 2001  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands  
Committee on Resources  
Washington, D.C.**

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The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:15 a.m., in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. George Radanovich [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

**STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. RADANOVICH. Good morning. I apologize. For some reason, I had this down as 10:30. Please forgive me for being late to my own

hearing. There are a lot of important people here and I apologize. So with that, I will just get going.

The Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands will come to order. Today, the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands will hear testimony on four bills, H.R. 2109, H.R. 2748, H.R. 3421, and H.R. 3425.

The first bill, H.R. 2109, introduced by Congresswoman Carrie Meek, would authorize the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study on suitability and feasibility of designing a 77-acre Virginia Key Beach in Florida as a unit of the National Park System. From the late 1940's to the late 1960's, Virginia Key Beach was the only beach African Americans were permitted in Dade County, Florida.

Carrie, it is good to see you here today, and glad you are feeling better.

Mrs. MEEK. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. You are looking well.

Our second bill is H.R. 2748, introduced by Congressman David Dreier, and it would authorize the establishment of a national data base for purposes of identifying, locating, and cataloging the many memorials and permanent tributes to American veterans.

The third bill is H.R. 3421, which I introduced and would authorize the Secretary of Interior to provide supplemental funding and other services and facilities necessary to assist the State of California or local school districts in providing educational services for students attending the three schools located in Yosemite National Park. I would like to thank Kevin Kelly from Mariposa and Max Stauffer from Fish Camp for coming across the country to testify in support of the bill. I would also like to mention that I plan to continue to work with members of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee regarding their concerns over the use of recreation fee demonstration program funds in the bill.

Our final bill is H.R. 3425, which I also introduced and would direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of establishing Highway 49 in California, known as the "Golden Chain Highway," as a National Heritage Corridor. Highway 49 transverses nine counties along the Western slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and remains rich in the history of the 1849 gold rush. The proposed corridor would run from the city of Oakhurst in Madera County to the city of Vinton in Sierra County.

At this time, I would like to ask unanimous consent that Congresswoman Meek and Congressman Dreier be permitted to sit on the dias following the statements, Congressman Hastings, if you wish, as well. If there is no objection, so ordered.

[The statement of Mr. Radanovich follows:]

**Statement of Hon. George Radanovich, a Representative in Congress from the State of California**

Good morning and welcome to the hearing today. The Subcommittee will come to order. Today, the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands will hear testimony on four bills—H.R. 2109, H.R. 2748, H.R. 3421, and H.R. 3425.

The first bill, H.R. 2109, introduced by Congresswoman Carrie Meek, would authorize the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study on the suitability and feasibility of designating the 77-acre Virginia Key Beach in Florida, as a unit of the National Park System. From the late 1940's to the late 1960's, Virginia Key Beach was the only beach African Americans were permitted in Dade County, Florida. Carrie it is good to see you here today. I hope you are feeling better.

Our second bill, H.R. 2748, introduced by Congressman David Drier, would authorize the establishment of a national database for purposes of identifying, locating, and cataloging the many memorials and permanent tributes to America's veterans.

The third bill, H.R. 3421, which I introduced, would authorize the Secretary of Interior to provide supplemental funding and other services and facilities necessary to assist the State of California or local schools districts in providing educational services for students attending the three schools located within Yosemite National Park. I would like to thank Kevin Kelly from Mariposa and Max Stauffer from Fish Camp for coming across the country to testify in support of the bill. I would also like to mention that I plan to continue to work with Members of the Interior Appropriation Subcommittee regarding their concerns over the use of Recreation Fee Demonstration Program funds in the bill.

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I would like to thank all of our witnesses for being here today to testify on these bills and now turn the time over to Mrs. Christensen.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I would like to thank all of the witnesses for being here today to testify on these bills and now turn my time over to Mrs. Christensen.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN, A DELEGATE  
IN CONGRESS FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to welcome all of our speakers here, panelists this morning, particularly our colleagues who are seated at the table.

As you said, we are going to take testimony on four unrelated bills this morning. The first bill, H.R. 2109, was introduced by our friend Carrie Meek and our colleague to authorize a study by the National Park Service of the Virginia Key Beach in Florida. This beach derives its importance from history rather than from its natural or recreational qualities, because as you pointed out, it was the first beach in South Florida to be opened to African Americans, and I believe at that time it was the only beach open to African Americans, and for many years, it was a popular recreation and meeting place for the community. I know Congresswoman Meek and I know personally how hard she has worked to get this hearing and we are glad we could have it before we go home for the winter recess.

The second bill, H.R. 2748, sponsored by our Rules Committee Chair David Dreier, directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a data base containing information on all military memorials in the United States. This legislation apparently sprang from one individual citizen's attempt to create a comprehensive list of such memorials and we look forward to hearing from Mr. Rooney regarding his efforts.

We support the idea but anticipate that whichever agency is ultimately tasked with this project, be it the VA or the National Park Service, that they may have some legitimate concerns with the mechanics of implementing this idea. Hopefully, the hearing today will provide us with information that will be helpful to us in pursuing this important goal.

H.R. 3421, which you introduced last week, Mr. Chairman, authorizes the National Park Service to provide funds and services to supplement the educational services and facilities provided to the children of Yosemite National Park employees and the park concessionaire at three small local schools. It provides a very unique arrangement for funding schools and we are interested in hearing more about the implications of that arrangement.

Finally, H.R. 3425 appears to be a straightforward study to determine whether Highway 49 in California would qualify for designation as a National Heritage Corridor. This highway runs through your district and we look forward to hearing more from you and from the panelists who have joined us this morning about the history and character of this area.

So I, too, appreciate the presence of our witnesses and look forward to hearing their testimony.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mrs. Christensen.

We will begin with our first member, Congressman Dreier. Welcome to the meeting. You are here to discuss H.R. 2748 and please begin. Thank you for your patience, all of you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID DREIER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Let me say what a great honor it is for me to be before your Subcommittee, and I want to congratulate you on assuming the very important Chairmanship of this Subcommittee. I know that your district, being one of the most spectacular spots on the face of the earth, which I visited part of, it is almost as nice as some of South Florida, but it is a beautiful spot and I know that the people of California are very proud to have you in the position that you are.

Having met with people from Yosemite, I am always somewhat embarrassed to say that I have never been there before in my life. Now, you have extended invitations to me to come and I do, after this hearing, look forward to having the opportunity to be there.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Good.

Mr. DREIER. Let me also, Mr. Chairman and Mrs. Christensen, say that I, just a few weeks ago, went to give a speech in Key Biscayne and my dear friend and fellow member of the Rules Committee, Mr. Hastings, has just informed me that in the process, I went right by Virginia Key and he has told me about the important history there. I would like to simply say that while I have not heard, and, frankly, will be gone by the time they have testimony because I have to go for a meeting with the Ambassador from Brazil in just a few minutes, I wholeheartedly endorse their effort here and believe that the important history of Virginia Key is something that should be recognized.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you.

Mr. DREIER. Let me say that I am very privileged to be here, having introduced the legislation that you, Mr. Chairman, and Mrs. Christensen mentioned. I introduced it along with my California colleague, Mr. Schiff, and I met with constituents of mine and heard the story of Brian Rooney, who, as you mentioned, we will hear from. I should say also that his sons, Noah and Damon, have joined him here and he is very proud of them and they of him in

this effort that he has put into this and he is going to, I am sure, be recounting to the Subcommittee his very moving experience in Vietnam which motivated him to form the Remembering Veterans Who Earned Their Stripes organization. When I heard this story, I was inspired to help him expand his data base to a national level.

I believe that this effort is worthy of our Congressional support. Now, Mr. Rooney has already worked at the local and State level to pass legislation in California, and incidentally, our colleague, Mr. Schiff, when he served in the California State Senate, led the charge on this, and they established a State registry of veterans' memorials. As I said, the legislation passed the California State Legislature last year, and the legislation that Mr. Schiff and I have introduced, the National War Permanent Tribute Historical Data base Act, will expand upon the efforts last year, which included House Concurrent Resolution 345. This resolution, which expresses the need for a catalog of public memorials, was included in Title III of Public Law 106-511, which was signed into law on November 13 of last year.

Mr. Chairman, once completed, this data base will provide our nation with an excellent educational resource for future generations to learn about the contributions from the members of our armed forces. We all as a nation know that we today are at war and have seen the tremendous sacrifice of many. At this moment, the President has just been in the Rose Garden talking about the 1972 ABM Treaty and our move away from there. We know that national security is a top priority, and recognizing those who have fought on behalf of our freedom is a very important thing for us to do. I think that the proposal that we have offered here is a reminder of the sacrifice that so many people have made on behalf of our country.

Mr. Rooney has also attended numerous veterans' events in order to provide information on his efforts. Veterans' groups throughout the country, including the Los Angeles County Veterans' Advisory Commission and the Minority Officers Association, have strongly endorsed the idea of a national data base, and I should say Mr. Rooney is also in constant contact with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and has received important feedback on his ideas there. I should add parenthetically that I have had the opportunity to discuss with Secretary Principi, our fellow Californian, this important issue, as well.

I want to voice my support for transferring authority to the data base from the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, because I understand there are some concerns that the Veterans' Affairs Department has with this. Those were not voiced to me directly from the conversation I had with Secretary Principi, but I understand that that has come forward recently.

With more than 20 battlefields, including many of the major Civil War sites, currently under National Park Service jurisdiction, it does seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that it would be a natural that this agency has the resources necessary to effectively oversee a war memorial data base.

I will say that I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, your very able staff here who was extraordinarily attentive

when we came in, telling me that we would start promptly at ten o'clock—

[Laughter.]

Mr. DREIER. —and I will say that we do appreciate your support. Let me just again commend my colleagues who are here at the table with me. I want to encourage you to be just as attentive to their testimony as you have been to mine. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Chairman Dreier. I appreciate the input and look forward to moving the bill along.

Mr. DREIER. If there are any questions, I am happy to respond.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Are there any questions?

[No response.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much.

Mr. DREIER. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Dreier follows:]

**Statement of Hon. David Dreier, a Representative in Congress from the State of California**

Good morning, Chairman Radanovich and members of the Subcommittee. I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for taking the time to hold this hearing on H.R. 2748, the National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act. As you know, I introduced this legislation along with my California colleague, Congressman Adam Schiff. After meeting with a constituent of mine and hearing the story of Brian Rooney's moving experience in Vietnam, which motivated him to form RVETS, the "Remembering Veterans Who Earn Their Stripes" organization, I was inspired to try and help him expand his database to a national level. I believe that this effort is worthy of Congressional support. Mr. Rooney has already worked at the local and state level to pass legislation in California to require a state registry of veterans memorials. This legislation passed the California State Legislature last year. My legislation, H.R. 2748, the National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act, will expand upon my efforts last year which included House Concurrent Resolution 345. This resolution, which expresses the need for a catalogue of public memorials, was included in Title III of Public Law 106-511 which was signed into law on November 13, 2000.

Once completed, this database will provide our nation with an excellent educational resource for future generations to learn about the contributions from the members of our armed forces. It will also serve as another reminder of the sacrifice so many people gave to defend our country and its democratic ideals. Mr. Rooney has also attended numerous veterans events in order to provide information on his efforts. Veterans groups throughout the country, including the Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Commission and the Minority Officers Association, Inc., have strongly endorsed the idea of a national database. Mr. Rooney is also in constant contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs and has received important feedback on his ideas.

In addition, I want to voice my support for transferring authority of the database from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior. With more than 20 battlefields, including many of the major Civil War sites, currently under National Park Service jurisdiction, I believe that this agency has the resources necessary to effectively oversee a war memorial database.

I look forward to working with this Subcommittee, as well as the full Resources Committee, to see that H.R. 2748 receives the consideration it deserves. Thank you for your time.

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Mr. RADANOVICH. The next person to testify, Carrie, it is good to see you here and glad you are doing better. I have to tell you, we have a new name for this bill. We think it should be the "Carrie Meek's Back to Old Virginy Key Beach Bill."

[Laughter.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. That is a little bit of Subcommittee staff humor I thought I would pass along to you, but it is such an honor to have

you here with us. Please take the time to explain the proposal and begin whenever you are ready.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CARRIE MEEK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN  
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mrs. MEEK. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank your ranking member and the members of this distinguished Committee for holding this hearing. I was very, very worried about this hearing happening this session, so I am so glad and thankful that you brought it to the Committee.

Holding this hearing is very significant, Mr. Chairman, in that this Virginia Key Beach is not only of historical significance, but it is also of cultural as well as environmental significance, and it shows that all the way back to the early part of the history of Virginia Key that the county and the city saw the significance of this in that, at that time, the beaches were fully segregated and it was impossible for African Americans to be admitted to any beach, God-owned beach, in Dade County. So this beach was set aside for African Americans. I am not sure they knew how important it was at that time in terms of its environmental importance as well as other.

I want to say that I am very pleased to have with me a young man from the Rules Committee. I am not intimidated by the Chairman nor the ranking member of the Rules Committee being with me, but I am so glad they are here.

I am also submitting for the record a statement from my good friend and supporter, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and that has been submitted for the record.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

**Statement of Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Representative in Congress from  
the State of Florida**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to submit a statement on behalf of this very important bill for my constituents in South Florida.

H.R. 2109 will authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Virginia Key Beach, Florida, for possible inclusion in the National Park System.

Mr. Chairman, Virginia Key is an area rich in history and meaning for the people of South Florida. This island, which lies in my Congressional district, was once the only beach open to African Americans in Miami. Due to the "whites-only" rule, other beaches in the area were closed to African Americans.

Although Virginia Key was only accessible by boat until the late 1940s, it was a cherished getaway, a social gathering place, and even a sacred site for religious services. The beach, known at the time as "Bear's Cut", enjoyed immense popularity among the African American population, and at the end of the 1950s, newly arrived Cubans found that Virginia Key Beach was the one that they preferred.

Virginia Key is a 1,000-acre barrier island with a unique and sensitive natural environment, it is non-residential, and it is largely in its natural state, home to ponds and waterways, a tropical hardwood hammock, and a large wildlife conservation area.

Mr. Chairman, Virginia Key Beach is rich both in history and in natural beauty. This area is ideal for consideration to be included in our National Park System and would indeed be a splendid addition.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support this bill and I urge the Committee to approve it as quickly as possible and bring it to the floor for consideration.

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Mrs. MEEK. This is a beach, Mr. Chairman, that you will find is being preserved and it is well worth inclusion in the National Park

System. It offers the contributions which I have mentioned, historical, cultural, and environmental. I have given each member of the Committee a copy of this booklet, which is a very good compilation to show the history and the cultural and the environmental significance of Virginia Key Beach.

[The information on Virginia Key Beach Park follows:]

[The booklet, "The Future Development of Historic Virginia Key Beach Park," has been retained in the Committee's official files.]

Mrs. MEEK. You will note that it is comparable to any of the other units that are included in the National Park Service.

I would like to just take a personal reference, Chairman, to say to you, many years ago, as they say in my district, back in the day, I was a member of the National Board of Parks and Recreation and I have not seen any better unit to be added to this system than Virginia Key and I am really hoping that this Committee will see the value in this.

It was the only beach, as I told you, that was created, and despite the impediments of segregation and many other things, it became a very thriving center for the good of the social and cultural aspects of people who live in Dade County. It was used for baptisms. It was used for courtships. It was for honeymoons, for organizational meetings. And I must say, Mr. Chairman, even though I am very young, I did attend Virginia Key Beach. I carried my children to Virginia Key Beach. So we used the park very frequently. It was the only thing we had.

It is a national treasure and it stands there as a monument to America's journey toward racial equality during that time. As a reminder of our national heritage, Virginia Key sort of symbolizes the struggle of African Americans in the 20th century toward the racial segregation, which at that time was so significant in the South.

Now, I must mention that the National Park Service has very few sites of civil rights significance. Of the 385 units that are presently in the National Park System, only four have been designated to commemorate the civil rights era. This is important, Mr. Chairman. Recent studies have shown that there is very low participation by African Americans in the National Park System. I am not sure why this is so, but I am sure that an addition of a park such as this would certainly add to a better participation by minorities, particularly African Americans, because it does show the civil rights struggle as well as a beautiful environmental area.

In addition to that, any environmentalist who attends and looks at this park will know that it is an exceptional national resource that is characterized by a unique and sensitive natural environment.

I could go on all day, Chairman Radanovich, about Virginia Key Beach. I am going to submit my remarks for the record. But it is so important that this Committee realize that if you were to carry this bill forward, you would really be carrying forward a milestone in the development of the National Park System. It is a 1,000-acre barrier island. Although there has been some limited development, the island is non-residential and includes ponds and waterways, a tropical hardwood hammock, and a large wildlife conservation area.

It is home to more than 25 species of birds during the winter. The water is shallow there. It contains numerous grass beds that support manatees, young sea turtles, and many juvenile fishes.

Finally, let me note that Virginia Key's excellent location and its outstanding accessibility makes it very attractive to anyone who would visit that area. Other natural exhibits that are there and attractions, such as Everglades National Park, Big Cypress and Biscayne National Park, are extraordinary resources, but they are not readily accessible as Virginia Key Beach. Virginia Key Beach is accessible. There is even a metro bus transportation connection near there.

It occupies, Mr. Chairman, a very important place in the hearts of all of us in South Florida. Its value to the Nation and to Florida is based not just on its natural beauty, but also on its legacy of the ongoing struggle of African Americans for equal rights and social justice.

I am not nearly the civil libertarian as my fellow Congressperson is, but I can say to you that this park has really shown a significant part of our history and the struggles we have had and would ensure that Virginia Key Beach, if it is nationally recognized, we are sure that it will be preserved and protected for future generations.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank your ranking member and each member of this important Committee for allowing this hearing. Thank you very much. Pass the bill, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mrs. Meek.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Meek follows:]

**Statement of Hon. Carrie P. Meek, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida**

Chairman Radanovich, Ranking Member Christensen and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for holding this hearing on my bill, H.R. 2109, which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Virginia Key Beach in Miami, Florida, for possible inclusion in the National Park System.

I would like to enter for the record a statement of support by my colleague and friend, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen who was unable to attend this hearing. I am also proud and grateful to the entire South Florida delegation for sponsoring my bill.

I believe that Virginia Key Beach in Miami, FL provides an excellent nexus among history, culture, and nature that is similar to many other units of the National Park System and in accord with the Park System's mission.

Virginia Key Beach is an historically important and environmentally significant place worthy of being preserved and studied for inclusion in the National Park System.

I have given each Member of the Committee a booklet that provides a brief history of Virginia Key Beach and outlines some of the efforts being made to restore this significantly historic site.

Mr. Chairman, Virginia Key Beach was the only beach in Miami where African Americans could go to swim in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s. "Virginia Key Beach, a Dade County Park for the exclusive use of Negroes" opened on August 1, 1945. Until that time, Miami's beaches had been reserved for whites only.

Dade County created the park in response to the efforts of the African-American Community to integrate the beaches in Miami.

In May 1945, community leaders and members of the Negro Service Council (NSC), a forerunner of the Urban League of Greater Miami, decided to force the issue to allow blacks to use a beach. They discussed a "wade in" at an all-white beach called Baker's Haulover. They wanted to force the arrest of the blacks for wading in the water at a white beach. They were aware of recent decisions by the

Supreme Court that had ruled that segregation of public lands and parks was unconstitutional.

When sheriff's deputies were called to the beach, Dade County Sheriff Jimmy Sullivan ordered them not to arrest the bathers knowing that the action was indefensible in court. On June 5, 1945, the Miami Herald reported that County Park Superintendent would announce plans for a Negro beach.

The location for a beach was less than ideal; there was no bridge and the only way to get there was by taking a boat from the Miami River.

Despite these impediments, African Americans made Virginia Key Beach a thriving center for their social and cultural activities. Virginia Key Beach quickly became a cherished getaway, a social gathering place, and even a sacred site for religious services.

The beach was the site for baptisms, courtships and honeymoons, organizational gatherings, visiting celebrities and family recreation.

In its heyday, the parking lots were usually full on weekends, as families flocked to enjoy their little piece of paradise and children hopped on the Mini-Train or on the Merry-Go-Round.

Even after integration granted everyone a free choice of recreation areas, Virginia Key Beach remained the popular preference for many in the Black community.

I used the park frequently myself and brought my children there when they were young. The fact that I am in Congress today shows how much society has changed in the intervening years.

Virginia Key Beach is a national treasure that stands as a monument to America's journey toward racial equality. As a reminder of our national heritage, Virginia Key Beach symbolizes the struggle of African Americans in the 20th Century during the era of racial segregation in the South and at the onset of the Civil Rights Era.

Mr. Chairman, there are few of these sites in the National Park System. Out of 385 units currently in the Park System, only 4 have been designated to commemorate the Civil Rights Era. This is important. We do not do enough of this.

In addition to representing an important part of the history of African Americans in the Southeastern United States, Virginia Key Beach also is an exceptional natural resource characterized by a unique and sensitive natural environment.

The beach is part of Virginia Key, a 1000-acre barrier island that is situated just off the mainland of the City of Miami, between Key Biscayne to the south and Fisher Island to the north.

Although there has been some limited development, the island is non-residential and includes ponds and waterways, a tropical hardwood hammock, and a large wild-life conservation area.

The northwest portion of the island and adjoining waters are prime areas for local and migratory wildlife. The Key is home to more than 25 species of birds during the winter, while its shallow waters contain extensive grass beds that support manatees, young sea turtles, and many juvenile fishes.

Our society values things that are rare. This Congress has often expressed its belief in the importance of historic preservation. Undeveloped, natural areas on coastal, barrier islands are extraordinarily rare. We should place a high value on preserving them.

Finally, let me note Virginia Key Beach's excellent location and its outstanding accessibility. Other national attractions such as Everglades National Park, Big Cypress and Biscayne National Park are extraordinary resources, but they are not readily accessible for individuals without personal transportation. Virginia Key is accessible. There is the Miami-Dade Metro Bus connection that is further enhanced by a good link to South Florida's Metro Rail.

The huge numbers of tourists that fly into Miami, go on a cruise and then fly out of Miami, often do not have time for side trips to the Keys or the Everglades. They might, however, be able to find the time for a beach outing, a cultural/historical experience or a naturalist-led walk on Virginia Key Beach.

Mr. Chairman, Virginia Key Beach occupies a special place in the heart of all of us from South Florida. Its value to the nation and to Florida is based not just on its natural beauty, but also in its legacy of the ongoing struggle of African Americans for equal rights and social justice.

HR 2109 is an important step in recognizing this special place not only as a valuable piece of South Florida's history and culture, but also as part of our national heritage. Inclusion in the National Park System would ensure that Virginia Key Beach is preserved and protected for future generations.

Thank you once again for holding this hearing and for your consideration of this bill. I look forward to working with you to pass this legislation, before this session of Congress concludes.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I would like to introduce Congressman Hastings, since we are talking about the same issue, and then ask any other members afterwards on the panel that want to ask questions to please do so, and then invite you to join us on the dais.

Congressman Hastings, welcome. It is an honor to have you here and thank you very much.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ALCEE HASTINGS, A REPRESENTATIVE  
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a real honor to appear before you and your ranking member as well as all the other members of this Committee, all I call my friends. But I am here today with my best friend in Congress and she is my biggest booster next to my mom, so when she talks that stuff about me being young, it is serious for me.

In addition, no pun is intended, but Carrie has covered the waterfront on this issue, so there is very little left for me to say. I would be remiss, however, in spite of his absence, I do serve with my good friend and colleague, Chairman Dreier, on the Rules Committee and I thought it was more than thoughtful of him to be complimentary of this legislation as offered by Mrs. Meek and I really appreciate him doing that.

This is not meant to be a mutual admiration society, but the measure that he brings, if all the mechanical hitches can be worked out between Interior and Veterans, then it would seem to me more than logical. As a matter of fact, when Chairman Dreier and I were speaking earlier before this hearing, I had no knowledge that such a data base did not exist in the first place. It just seems to be a make sense proposition and I am sure that the Committee is going to give it active consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit my full statement for the record. It is brief, and I, too, shall be brief.

Mr. RADANOVICH. It will be included.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you. With that in mind, Mr. Chairman, I really am 65 years young, and I was born in Altamonte Springs, Florida. During the halcyon days of segregation, there were four beaches—I do not know whether Mrs. Meek knows this—in Florida that African Americans could go to. I was fortunate in that I lived in Central Florida, that approximately at the Fourth of July or the holiday period, my parents would take it upon themselves to go to some of those beaches.

One was American Beach, interestingly named, in Jacksonville, Florida. The other was Dr. Lowrey's Beach in Leesburg, Florida, which is in Central Florida, and was very close to us so we went there frequently. The other, I did not get to know until I moved to South Florida 40 years ago and that was still during the halcyon days of segregation. The other was the Colored Beach in Dania, Florida. It has an interesting history. I do not think it deserves the same recognition as Virginia Key does, Virginia Key being the fourth of only four places for all African Americans. There were none on the West Coast of Florida. Fort Myers, you could not go to the beach.

I might add, when we say you could not go to the beach, we sneaked on the beach, you understand, and there were folks, I

might add a significant number of people, that were seeing to it that we had those opportunities.

But this was a place where people congregated. As Carrie has said, it is a place where people were baptized, and I can recall as a young man, young lawyer, coming to South Florida and knowing that I wanted to go to the beach, either with then my girlfriend, later to be my wife, and whatever other fun activities, we would look forward to going to Virginia Key.

I heard about Virginia Key when I was in elementary school, and it was 40 years later before I had an opportunity to go there. It has an enormous history.

The most important thing that I think this Committee would take into consideration, and I will stop right here, is it adds nothing to the national debt. It would be one thing if we were here asking for money. Basically, what we are asking for is to preserve a legacy of a well-deserved project brought to us by one of the hardest working people on behalf of all of her constituents in South Florida, and I beg the Chairman and your members of the Committee to give positive consideration to this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and ranking member, for permitting me to testify before you today. It is a real honor.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Hastings.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hastings follows:]

**Statement of Hon. Alcee L. Hastings, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida**

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony to the Committee on behalf of H.R. 2109, a bill which I have cosponsored that would authorize the Secretary of Interior to conduct a special resource study of historic Virginia Key Beach, Florida, for the inclusion into the National Park System. Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to support a very important bill which will allow Congress to preserve and protect this beautiful beach site area.

This legislation allows for the beautiful palm-studded old Florida beach located on a 1,000-acre barrier island, one of Miami's real treasures, to be recognized as a National Park. Miami's historical Virginia Key Beach has been one of Florida's most beautiful and unique areas since 1896. Virginia Key was at one time one of Miami's most popular beaches for African-Americans to enjoy.

Mr. Chairman, this bill does not add to the national debt, so there is no need to oppose it for economic reasons. This bill does not change any of the requirements for the inclusion process for national parks. All this bill calls for is the recognition of the 77-acre historic Virginia Key Beach site in Miami, Florida. Passing this bill would both a reasonable and responsible approach in recognizing the significant value of this former "colored beach". Florida needs a place that is recognized for its historical significance, a place that can be enjoyed today for both recreational purposes and so that people can learn about the history of this extraordinary scenic recreational site.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before the Committee and hope for the passage of this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Mr. RADANOVICH. Are there any questions from any other members on the Committee, the Subcommittee? Mr. Souder?

Mr. SOUDER. Congresswoman Meek or Congressman Hastings, does Miami have plans to keep the rest of the key in a relatively natural state?

Mrs. MEEK. Yes, they do. Miami does. It belongs to the city of Miami and they do have plans to keep it well.

Mr. SOUDER. Would there be an uncomfotability if the legislation moves forward of putting some obligations on Miami and Florida to participate in maintaining an area so you do not get it isolated, an isolated place where people can go but, in fact, it gets surrounded either by commercially selling the land or by other types of development? It would be important if it became part of the Park Service.

If I can add to that, it may be that this would fit a lakeshore type of situation or a historical park. It does not necessarily need—I mean, there are different types of units. Have you given any thought to that?

Mrs. MEEK. We worked very closely with the city of Miami. At this point, there are no plans for such kinds of eroding development. Right now, it is a natural site and it appears that they want to keep it a natural site. Of course you know, politically, there are always some people who want to add development to a beautiful, pristine area such as this. Right now, there are no plans for such development.

Mr. SOUDER. It is an important concept in the Indiana Jones lakeshore off of Chicago, where many people for years went, and now as we try to rebuild that park, if you do not have some protections, it is better to head it off early than to try to undo it later—

Mrs. MEEK. Yes, you are right.

Mr. SOUDER. —because it is costing us far more for each little acre getting back from the different industries and the development than it would have ever if there had been longer-term planning.

Mrs. MEEK. Yes, sir. The Committee with whom we have worked very closely, the Virginia Key Park Commission, which was commissioned by the city of Miami, has been quite a strong watchdog toward this type of thing. At this point, I can say those things are not relevant. I mean, they have not come across. They have fought anything that has in any way jeopardized the development of Virginia Key. That is not to say what will happen in ten, 15 years from now, but right now, there is nothing on the books for it.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you.

Mr. Holt?

Mr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whenever our colleague Alcee Hastings speaks, he makes a compelling argument, and I do not know how anyone could say no to Carrie Meek. I think this is a fine idea and I look forward to this legislation moving along.

I do have a question about what has been done so far to record, interpret, and present the social history of this important area that was so important in the lives of so many people. I gather it is really the role that Virginia Key Beach played in the lives of people that we are trying to recognize here, more than the physical spot, and I would like to know what has been done up to this point.

Mrs. MEEK. Well, the Black Archives History Research Association of Dade County and in Florida has done significant work in preserving historically what has been done at Virginia Key Beach. This has been a significant project which has been supported and developed by not only the city of Miami, but the county, as well, and it is an important site in the civil rights significance of the nat-

ural trails that have been recognized by the Florida Legislature. So there is quite a bit of preservation work done with this particular park and this particular site. Alcee?

Mr. HASTINGS. If I may add, Mr. Holt, and thank you for your clarifying compliment, the archivist that Carrie speaks of is one of the nation's more prominent ones. Her name is Dorothy Fields, and Dorothy some time ago, not only as it pertains to Virginia Key but all of the history of African Americans in that portion of Florida and South Florida, and this Congress has participated in funding a project that will also cover the preservation of not only Virginia Key but all of it in Fort Lauderdale, in my district, which is going to be one of the preeminent, and I mean most sincerely, one of the preeminent black archivist places for scholars to study, but enough.

I would go back to Mr. Souder's point very quickly of this area is 77 acres and has been for a long time considered an area of preservation. But lest we leave here with anybody thinking that it is still a colored beach, what normally has happened in these situations, when you all discovered what we had, all of a sudden you began to use it, and so the beach is very well used by everybody. Let me make that very clear.

Mrs. MEEK. And one other significant thing, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me to speak again, is that with the efforts of this Congress, the Corps of Engineers has taken a very strong role in redeveloping the beach in terms of beach restoration. That is a very big problem in Florida, beach restoration. We have quite a few storms and hurricanes, and as a result, many of the beaches lose the sand. So the Corps of Engineers has come in, thanks to this Congress, and they have restored the beach. They have done a lot of work in the barrier islands to make this a better place to develop a park.

Mr. HOLT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much.

Ms. McCollum?

Ms. MCCOLLUM. No questions.

Mr. RADANOVICH. No questions? Our next panel includes Mr. David Mihalic from Yosemite, but he is also here representing the Park Service on this issue, so you are more than welcome to join us on the dais if you have any questions. Thank you very much.

Mrs. MEEK. Thank you.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Our next panel includes the Honorable Vincent Barile, who is the Deputy Under Secretary for Management of the National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Washington, D.C. Mr. Barile, thank you very much for being here. It also includes the Honorable David Mihalic, who is the Superintendent of Yosemite National Park with the National Park Service, Department of Interior, here to speak on two bills regarding Yosemite, but also representing the Park Service on Virginia Key Beach. Mr. Mihalic, welcome as well.

Mr. Barile, if you would like to begin regarding your testimony on H.R. 2748, on the American Veterans' Memorials bill.

**STATEMENTS OF VINCENT L. BARILE, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT, NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION, CENTRAL OFFICE, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. BARILE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding H.R. 2748, also known as the National War Permanent Tribute Historical Data base Act. I have submitted my written testimony for the record.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs' mission is "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan." These words, spoken by Abraham Lincoln in his second inaugural address, form the basis for the Department's existence. In today's environment, President Lincoln's statement reflects VA's responsibility to serve America's veterans and their families. In fulfillment of these responsibilities, VA's focus is on provision of direct beneficiary services.

My organization, the National Cemetery Administration, is one of three administrations within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. We operate and maintain 120 national cemeteries across the country. During the last fiscal year, we maintained over 2.4 million gravesites of veterans and their dependents. We performed over 84,000 burials of both casket and cremated remains and we provide over 300,000 headstones and markers.

Our country is now losing our World War II and Korean War veterans at an increasing rate. We lost an estimated 663,000 veterans in fiscal year 2001. In the next couple of years, we expect the death rate to peak, which means 1,800 veterans will die each day. We are committed to continue to meet the burial needs of our veterans today and in the future.

H.R. 2748 would require VA to expand its mission to include establishing and maintaining a data base for permanent memorials located worldwide. For the reasons below that I am going to elaborate on, VA cannot support enactment of H.R. 2748.

Based on our research, the data base contemplated by this bill would tend to duplicate resources already available. Certain Federal agencies and numerous private organizations already maintain publicly accessible Internet data bases that provide information about national war memorials. The Smithsonian Art Museum currently maintains a data base located on the Internet as part of its Save Outdoor Sculpture project. Over 32,000 sculptures and monuments are listed, of which over 4,000 entries relate to veterans.

The National Park Service maintains several searchable data bases on its Internet home page, included data bases for the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks, Historic Buildings and Structures, and military history. Also, the American Battle Monuments Commission, an organization in charge of maintaining American cemeteries abroad as well as several war memorials, has information on its website regarding the memorials under its jurisdiction.

The creation, oversight, and management of a worldwide inventory of American war memorials of this magnitude would exceed the current mission capabilities of VA, which involve administration of quality health care to veterans, provision of monetary as-

sistance to disabled veterans, and the operation of the national cemeteries. If a website were created to consolidate historical information and data on war memorials, VA could provide information on its cemeteries and war memorials under its jurisdiction.

VA's policy on information technology is that only data that has been verified by VA may be displayed on its website. Thus, any information provided to VA for its website would have to be independently verified by the VA before it could be used.

Further, any project outsourced to a private entity, the cost of which exceeds \$1 million, must be approved by VA's capital investment proposal process and would be subject to governmental contracting procedures. VA cannot accurately estimate the cost of this project, since the number of memorials that would be inventoried is not known. However, maintaining and updating the data base would be an ongoing project, the cost of which could not be covered by a one-time appropriation.

Our veterans have fought and paid for our nation's freedom and independence. We all owe them a great deal and we should honor their memories. It is important to remember that VA's primary mission is to meet the medical benefits and burial needs of our veterans and their veterans and survivors.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement and I will be pleased to respond to any questions you or the members of the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Barile.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barile follows:]

**Statement of Vincent L. Barile, Deputy Under Secretary for Management,  
National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding H.R. 2748, also known as the "National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act." This bill, if enacted, would "authorize the establishment of a national database for purposes of identifying, locating, and cataloging the many memorials and permanent tributes to America's veterans."

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) mission is "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan." These words, spoken by Abraham Lincoln in his second inaugural address, form the basis for the Department's existence. In today's environment, President Lincoln's statement reflects VA's responsibility to serve America's veterans and their families with respect and compassion, and to be their principal advocate in promoting the health, welfare, and dignity of all veterans in recognition of their service to our Nation. In fulfillment of these responsibilities, VA's focus is on provision of direct beneficiary services, not performance of historical research and archival functions.

VA is organized into three main administrations: the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). My organization, NCA, is responsible for meeting the burial needs of our Nation's veterans. We operate and maintain 120 national cemeteries across the country—we consider these our "national shrines." In fiscal year 2001, we maintained over 2.4 million gravesites of veterans and their dependents. This number continues to grow. In fiscal year 2001, we performed over 84,000 burials of both casketed and cremated remains. NCA is also responsible for administering the headstone and marker program—we provided over 300,000 headstones and markers in fiscal year 2001. Our country is now losing our World War II and Korean War veterans at an increasing rate—we lost an estimated 663,000 veterans in fiscal year 2001. In the next couple of years, we expect the death rate to peak, which means 1,800 veterans will die each day. We need to stay focused on how we can continue to meet the burial needs of our veterans today and in the future.

H.R. 2748 would require VA to expand its mission to include establishing and maintaining a database of permanent memorials located worldwide commemorating military conflicts of the United States or the service and sacrifice of any United

States Armed Forces veteran. The database would provide information on the location, history, and background of each memorial. The database would be accessible to the public through the Department's Internet website in a format that would permit the public to submit information on war memorials for the purpose of updating and expanding the database. The proposed legislation would also authorize a one-time appropriation of \$3.2 million to implement the worldwide database project. For the following reasons, VA cannot support enactment of H.R. 2748.

Based on our research, the database contemplated by H.R. 2748 would tend to duplicate resources already available, and the need for such an additional database has not been demonstrated. Certain Federal agencies and numerous private organizations already maintain publicly accessible Internet databases that provide information about national war memorials. Two Federal entities, the Smithsonian American Art Museum (Smithsonian) with its partner Heritage Preservation, Inc., a private non-profit, and the National Park Service, already have active databases containing thousands of national war memorial and monument entries. The Smithsonian maintains a database located on the Internet at [www.siris.si.edu](http://www.siris.si.edu) as part of its Save Outdoor Sculpture! project. Over 32,000 sculptures and monuments are listed, of which over 4,000 entries relate to veterans. Information on these war memorials can be accessed by using a variety of search terms under the "Art Inventories" link located on the Smithsonian home page. The National Park Service has also catalogued thousands of structures, memorials, markers, and plaques located on national park lands that are associated with wars and military history. The National Park Service maintains several searchable databases on its Internet homepage "Park Net" at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), under the icon "Links to the Past," including databases for the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks, Historic Buildings & Structures, and Military History.

If the contemplated database were to be created, neither VA nor NCA-the VA component that would most likely be responsible for the project-would be equipped to administer it. The creation, oversight, and management of a worldwide inventory of American war memorials would exceed the current mission and capabilities of VA, which primarily involve administration of quality health care to veterans; provision of monetary assistance to disabled veterans and their families, dependents, and survivors; and operation of the national cemeteries. VA lacks the infrastructure and staff that would be necessary to develop and maintain the contemplated database. Alternatively, VA could provide information on its cemeteries and war memorials under its jurisdiction through another entity that maintains a publicly available database. For example, if a website were created to consolidate historical information on war memorials, VA could share historical information and data on structures located in all of its 120 cemeteries.

The proposed legislation anticipates that VA may contract with a private non-profit corporation, Remembering Veterans Who Earned Their Stripes (RVETS), which has already developed a working database of war memorials, for information or services to assist in the development and implementation of the database. VA's policy on information technology is that only data that has been verified by VA may be displayed on a VA website. Thus, any information obtained from RVETS would have to be independently verified by VA before it could be used. Further, although the proposed legislation refers to RVETS by name as a potential contractor, any project outsourced to a private entity, the cost of which exceeds \$1 million, must be approved by VA's Capital Investment Proposal process and would be subject to Government contracting procedures.

VA cannot accurately estimate the cost of this project, since the number of memorials that would be inventoried is not known. However, maintaining and updating the database would be an ongoing project the cost of which could not be covered by a one-time appropriation.

Our veterans have fought and paid for our Nation's freedom and independence. We all owe them a great deal, and we should honor their memories. It is important, though, to remember that VA's primary mission is to meet the medical, benefits, and burial needs of our veterans, and their dependents and survivors.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I will be pleased to respond to any questions you or the members of the Subcommittee may have.

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Mr. RADANOVICH. I think what we will do is ask you questions regarding this bill, and then Mr. Mihalic will be responding to the remaining three bills, so I will go ahead and start with some questions. Other members are able to, and then we will take testimony from Mr. Mihalic.

Mr. Barile, you had mentioned in your testimony that the legislation would duplicate data bases already in existence. Does the Department believe that these data bases collectively represent all the memorials, monuments, and tributes that exist today, especially in non-Federal sites?

Mr. BARILE. I do not believe we feel that it is comprehensive. In our own world of the VA, we are embarking upon doing our own inventory and validating that inventory. I would suspect that there is not a complete inventory anywhere.

Mr. RADANOVICH. And may I assume it is the Veterans' Affairs Department that has come to the conclusion that these memorials and the sites and the data bases should be managed by the National Park Service? If I am correct in that, then can you give me an explanation as to why?

Mr. BARILE. I would have to defer to the Park Service. We are not suggesting that it belongs with the Park Service. We are suggesting that it does not belong with the VA.

Mr. RADANOVICH. OK. Can you tell me, of the different sites that you know across the country, what is the percentage that you have in your data base? How much might be missing?

Mr. BARILE. I do not believe I have that information. We probably could try and find that for the record for you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. If you could generate that for us, that would be appreciated.

Mr. BARILE. Will do.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Any questions from any other members?

Mr. SOUDER. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Souder?

Mr. SOUDER. I just have a question, a couple of different things. I want to put kind of a plug in for something that is coming up the road. The American cemetery at Normandy, which I believe comes under the Department of Veterans' Affairs, is that correct?

Mr. BARILE. No. That comes under the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Mr. SOUDER. Then I will not ask you that question. In your statement where you catalogued all the different places you could go to try to find veterans' memorials, my assumption is that the thrust of this goal is to make that somewhat manageable. In my home area, for example, we have a Veterans' Park that had the first real developed Korean memorial. They are looking to build a chapel there. We have a Vietnam veterans' memorial. We have a World War I memorial arch. If they went to the Veterans' Department home page, are they likely to find any of those?

Mr. BARILE. No, sir, they would not. The only memorials you will find, and as I said, we are starting to do that, are our own. We recently hired an historian and we are doing our own inventory and validating. Principally, we look at the 2.4 million headstones and memorials as a memorial to the veterans' service. We have that catalogued. We are almost completed with that data base.

What we are now looking at is the historic structures within the cemeteries, as well as some of the structures that are within the hospital system, on those lands. At that point, then, we would be able to say within the VA boundaries. We are not capable of validating memorials that are outside of our jurisdiction.

Mr. SOUDER. That tremendously clarifies what the depth of the problem is, because many of the memorials, in addition to the Civil War sites—let me ask this question. At Gettysburg, for example, what would come under Veterans' and what would come under the Park Service? Is the cemetery under Veterans'?

Mr. BARILE. No. The cemetery at Gettysburg is under the National Parks. It is a national cemetery, but it is not under the VA's jurisdiction.

Mr. SOUDER. And certainly none of the memorials to the soldiers who died at Gettysburg or at other parks would be under the Veterans'?

Mr. BARILE. We have many Civil War cemeteries, not necessarily Gettysburg, but we have Civil War dead buried in our national cemeteries.

Mr. SOUDER. But a memorial, a tribute to them, unless it is in the cemetery, U.S. veterans' cemetery, would not be in your data base?

Mr. BARILE. That is correct.

Mr. SOUDER. And I think this illustrates some of the problem. How to get to this is a difficult question. But, for example, there is a big battle, so to speak, as to whether at some of these sites we should have the memorials. There was a period when we felt we should put memorials. The historic preservationists like the memorials. The natural preservationists want them off the battlefields. That is something, I am sure, of interest to veterans. How do they engage in that?

To use my own examples from Fort Wayne, the arch might be under Historic Landmarks. The Korean veterans' memorial, if you were looking for that, it is hard to tell how you would find it, and I think that is part of the idea behind this legislation. I mean, I have been further confused that Normandy is not under the Veterans', nor is the Gettysburg battlefield, but in some cases, Civil War people would be under a cemetery where you are or are not. The memorials may or may not be, even if they are on Federal property. Some are under the Park Service, some are under yours, some are independent, and I think that is partly what is trying to be put together here.

Part of my frustrations as a business person coming into a parks area is trying to look at things as categories and how Americans who want to love and preserve their cultural history can get a handle on the diversity of it if you do not have an MBA in searching through government sites.

Mr. BARILE. We agree with your frustration. We often get communications about A, B, and C cemeteries. Arlington is not ours, also. Arlington belongs to the Department of the Army, even though it is a national cemetery. So I understand your frustration and confusion. What we try to do is we put up our own website and we talk to the Park Service and/or Arlington and we let them know what we have and what is available and try to have that hyperlinked, so to speak.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Souder.

Mrs. Christensen?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The bill authorizes just the maintenance of a data base. I mean, we are not trying to put everything under the VA's jurisdiction. It is maintaining a data base. What I am hearing is that you object to the bill—you are not objecting to the data base, you are objecting to the fact that it is under the Veterans' Administration, that it would be placed there.

Mr. BARILE. That is correct. We feel that it is, to reference the Congressman's point, it is confusing for people. We agree that there is a need for maybe some centralized accountability. But as I said in my testimony, some of that is already existing in other entities. Now, it is not consistent. Some may have pictures, some may have descriptions. Our concern is that that falls beyond the jurisdiction of what we would feel comfortable maintaining.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Well, it is veterans and it just seems to me it should be done by the Veterans' Administration, but the bill also authorizes an appropriation to carry out the Act. It would not ask the Veterans' Administration to do it and use the funds that are already there for something else. There is also funding in the bill to create the data base.

Mr. BARILE. Any data base, once created, has to be maintained, updated, and again, I go back to the issue about validation. There are numerous monuments and memorials on private lands and public lands that are not within the jurisdiction of any Federal entity, and to put that on a website which then would be out for public consumption without feeling comfortable as to the authenticity of it, we have some concerns about that.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mrs. Christensen.

If there are no other questions, Mr. Mihalic, would you like to respond or have any input on behalf of the Department of Interior on this particular bill or this issue?

Mr. MIHALIC. Mr. Chairman, the Department does not have a position on this bill. I would be happy to respond to any questions. I do know that—this is a point of clarification. The monuments that we do have on our existing data base that were referred to are monuments and memorials at places, as Mr. Souder said, for example, at Gettysburg. In fact, almost 90 percent of them are on National Park units where there are monuments and memorials to the Civil War, also to the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, but most of those are on National Park units themselves.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I see. Would you be looking forward to the increased responsibility of maintaining a data base if it were given to you?

Mr. MIHALIC. Mr. Chairman, I do not think that—obviously, if Congress wants us to do that, we would look forward to it with great interest.

[Laughter.]

Mr. MIHALIC. But I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that—I think the concern is that, as Mr. Barile said, there are literally tens of thousands of these on every courthouse lawn and the cornerstone of every VFW building, and I am not sure if that is an appropriate place that the National Park Service should be. But we would be honored to try to help the Department of Veterans' Affairs in terms of trying to provide any type of expertise that we could or to sup-

port them. I mean, we would certainly be happy to support them in their efforts to catalog.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Good answer.

[Laughter.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. Any other questions? Yes?

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Mihalic, could I ask you a brief question about the studies question which comes up, because we pass bills to do studies all the time. What does, and my understanding from your written testimony on one of these, that few studies are done per year. Is there an appropriation line specifically for studies? How do you decide which studies you are going to do in queuing up?

Mr. MIHALIC. We have about, I believe, 41 studies right now and I am not sure whether they all have appropriations with them to do the studies. But our capability to do studies is that we can do only a few each year.

Mr. SOUDER. Is that a staffing issue?

Mr. MIHALIC. I think it is probably staffing and also the other responsibilities that we have.

Mr. SOUDER. And if appropriations were assigned for the study, do you know from your background, are the appropriations to cover the staffing or the field work? In other words, if there is an appropriation attached to it—in other words, we understand the difference between authorizing. That is symbolic. If it does not have any money, it has to get in a queue system and maybe see the light of day.

If that gives you the flexibility as a member to go try to get an appropriation for it, is the backlog in studies—which since right now the administration's position is no new net land, almost everything coming through is a study—that is clearly going to backlog that system unless we can figure out a way to fund the studies. And even a further side thing to that is, is it always necessary to do a study or sometimes can you move to implementation? I do not have a concept in my head how the Park Service handles a study versus an implementation.

Mr. MIHALIC. I believe with respect to appropriations, I believe that we do go through the normal process when we propose studies for a particular fiscal year. I will be happy to provide some clarifying information on that to make sure that I have got that right.

With respect to the other part of your question in terms of the Department's policy on studies, I am not sure we have a formal policy on studies, but I do know that the National Park Service ordinarily believes that a study of the significance of a unit is really the best way to go to determine if it does rise to the level of national significance that makes a particular site or an area an appropriate addition to the National Park System. So usually, we certainly prefer to engage in a study as opposed to just go straight to the establishment of a park where perhaps we have not had the opportunity to see if it is of National Park significance.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Chairman, maybe you could have the Department of Interior give us just a rough idea of how many studies they come back with a recommendation they do not do that are different from their—in other words, often, they oppose any new additions to the Park Service anyway, but do the studies really make a dif-

ference or is that merely a kind of a delay tactic of buying time? That is my curiosity.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Probably a little of both, but I know that we will be discussing that in regard to Mrs. Meek's bill and mine, as well, so naturally I want mine No. 1 and Mrs. Meek wants hers No. 2, ahead of the 41.

[Laughter.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. So that is kind of what we are going to be pushing for. But seriously, though, we are going to be discussing this further, I think, as we talk about these other bills. Is it something specific that you want to request, Mark, regarding the 41, or—

Mr. SOUDER. Well, I am wondering if they have any kind of historic track record of study requests passed by Congress and then what happens to those study requests.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And how many studies become part of the—

Mr. SOUDER. Yes. I will work with language. Some of those studies may be—how many studies annually does Congress pass and how many are actually implemented, and of those studies that are actually implemented, how many of those actually become parks versus come back as a recommendation, “no,” because what we may see is like a 10-year queue line that, in reality, has no impact on whether the things become a park or not.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Yes. I think that we can certainly, if we can formulate the request, I am sure the Park Service would be happy to comply with providing the information.

Mr. SOUDER. And it may be that what happens is it does not really change it, but it changes the targeting of the request and makes the park more effective.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Sure. Right.

Mr. SOUDER. But to kind of understand the relationship between the studies and just the passage of a bill.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Sure. Let us make it. You will work with us and the staff to put that language together, certainly.

Thank you, Mr. Mihalic, and also, Mr. Barile, thank you very much for coming here to speak on this particular bill.

Next, Mr. Mihalic, I think what we would like to do is discuss the Virginia Key Beach bill and then also the two bills that I have before the Committee, as well. So if you would like to provide an opening statement on those three, that would be great.

**STATEMENT OF DAVID MIHALIC, SUPERINTENDENT, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. MIHALIC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mrs. Christensen. I will summarize my remarks and ask that the full statement be added as part of the record.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of Interior's views on H.R. 2109. The Department believes that it is appropriate for the National Park Service to undertake a study of this nature and supports the legislation and concept. However, in light of the President's commitment to replacing the backlog of deferred maintenance needs within the National

Park System, we will not be requesting funding for this study in this fiscal year.

Nonetheless, our support of this study legislation should not be interpreted as to mean that the Department would necessarily support designation of a new unit of the National Park System. The study would evaluate the site's national significance and the suitability and feasibility of designating it as a unit of the National Park System. The guidelines specifically state that studies consider other alternatives for protection of the subject area besides direct management by the National Park Service.

At the present time, efforts are underway locally to promote recognition and restoration of Virginia Key Beach Park. In 1999, the city of Miami appointed the Virginia Key Beach Park Civil Rights Task Force to study and make recommendations for the site. A nomination for the National Register of Historic Places is currently being prepared for the site, and a special resource study conducted by the National Park Service would draw from the information compiled through these efforts and facilitate decisions about the appropriate means to recognize and protect the site.

We recommend one technical amendment to H.R. 2109, which is to change the name of the site in the bill text and the title from "Virginia Key Beach" to "Virginia Key Beach Park." Although the names have been used interchangeably, using the term "Virginia Key Beach Park" would help clarify that the study is focused on the 77-acre recreationsite and does not include the entire beach of Virginia Key.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement and I will be happy to answer questions that you or the Committee will have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mihalic follows:]

**Statement of David Mihalic, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park,  
National Park Service, Department of the Interior on H.R. 2109**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H. R. 2109. This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Virginia Key Beach in Biscayne Bay, Florida, where a recreational community for African Americans flourished at a time when non-whites were prohibited from using other beaches in the Miami area.

The Department believes that it is appropriate for the National Park Service to undertake a study of this nature, and supports this legislation in concept. However, in light of the President's commitment to reducing the backlog of deferred maintenance needs within the National Park System, we will not request funding for this study in this fiscal year and, because we need to devote available time and resources to completing previously authorized studies, we would not be able to begin the study until at least fiscal year 2005. There are 41 authorized studies that are pending, and we only expect to complete a few of those this year.

Furthermore, in order to better plan for the future of our national parks, we believe that studies should carefully examine the full life-cycle operation and maintenance costs that would result from each alternative considered. Additionally, our support of this study legislation should not be interpreted to mean that the Department would necessarily support designation of a new unit of the National Park System.

H. R. 2109 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Virginia Key Beach in Biscayne Bay, Florida. The study would evaluate the site's national significance and the suitability and feasibility of designating it as a unit of the National Park System. The bill calls for the study to be completed under the guidelines in Section 8 of P.L. 91-383, the National Park Service General Authorities Act of 1970, as amended, which contains the criteria for studying areas for potential inclusion in the National Park System. The guidelines specify that studies consider other alternatives for protection of the subject area besides direct management by the National Park Service.

Virginia Key Beach Park is a 77-acre site on the southeastern side of Virginia Key, an island of approximately 1000 acres located two miles east of downtown Miami, Florida and about one mile southwest of the southern tip of Miami Beach. Although there has been some limited development, the island is non-residential and includes ponds and waterways, a tropical hardwood hammock, and a large wild-life conservation area.

In the summer of 1945, at the "whites-only" Baker's Haulover Beach in north Dade County, a group of black men led by Judge Lawson E. Thomas staged a protest of the segregation laws that prohibited black persons from using the public beaches of Miami and Dade County. In response to the protest, county officials created a public beach for the black community on Virginia Key, which opened on August 1, 1945.

The beach at Virginia Key had been used by African Americans for at least the two previous decades. During World War II, the Navy used Virginia Key Beach for training African American servicemen who were not permitted to train in the waters along the "whites-only" beaches. It was not until 1945, however, that the county began building recreational facilities there and making the beach more accessible by providing ferry boat service until the completion of the Rickenbacker Causeway in 1949 allowed access by automobile.

Virginia Key Beach Park had bathhouses, picnic pavilions, a concession stand, and a carousel and other amenities. The beach remained segregated through the 1950's, until rights laws opened all the public beaches in the area. Still, through the next two decades, Virginia Key Beach remained a popular destination for many in the black community. In 1982, the area was transferred from the county to the City of Miami with the stipulation that the area be kept open and maintained as a public park and recreation area. However, the city closed Virginia Key Beach Park shortly after the transfer, citing the high cost of maintenance and operations. After nearly 20 years of non-use, the bathhouse, concessions building and other facilities have fallen into disrepair.

At the present time, efforts are underway locally to promote recognition and restoration of Virginia Key Beach Park. In 1999, the City of Miami appointed the Virginia Key Park Civil Rights Task Force to study and make recommendations for the site, one of which was to establish a more permanent entity to carry on the work of the task force. The Virginia Key Beach Park Trust was established in January, 2001, to implement the task force's recommendations. A nomination for the National Register of Historic Places is currently being prepared for the site. A special resource study conducted by the National Park Service would draw from the information compiled through these efforts and facilitate decisions about appropriate means to recognize and protect this site.

We recommend one technical amendment to H.R. 2109, which is to change the name of the site in the bill text and the title from "Virginia Key Beach" to "Virginia Key Beach Park." Although the names have been used interchangeably, using the term "Virginia Key Beach Park" would help clarify that the study is focused on the 77-acre recreation site and does not include the entire beach of Virginia Key. It also would be consistent with the name that is being used for the site in the nomination for the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

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Mr. MIHALIC. Would you like me to go ahead into the next testimony?

Mr. RADANOVICH. Why do you not go ahead and open those up, too, and then we will go right through.

Mr. MIHALIC. Mr. Chairman, this statement is to present the views of the Department of Interior on H.R. 3421. As I said earlier, I will summarize these remarks and ask that the full statement be made a part of the record.

While the Department believes that the students who attend schools in Yosemite National Park should have access to the same educational services and facilities found elsewhere in the State of California, we are concerned over the source of funds identified to accomplish the purposes of the bill, as well as a few other provisions in the bill. We would welcome the opportunity to work with

the Committee to identify an appropriate source of funds and to clarify certain provisions, but cannot support the bill in its current form.

The administration is generally concerned about the notion of diverting limited park funds to what is essentially a State responsibility. We do not want this to set a precedent that parks should take over responsibility for schools or create a National Park Service school system.

Because the schools in the park are located long distances from administrative offices of their school districts, there has been limited access to services that are normally available to students that attend schools elsewhere. For example, access to teachers to serve students with special needs is very limited, and road and weather conditions can often further reduce teachers' abilities to reach the park. Subjects such as band, art, music, choir, or even physical education are provided only if the parents are able to find additional funding or to hire an aide. Many facilities are in need of repair or do not meet standards.

Recruitment and retention of employees at Yosemite National Park is also adversely affected by the quality of park schools. Many highly qualified NPS employees with school-age children who might otherwise be interested in applying for jobs at Yosemite are discouraged from doing so because of the school situation. Recently, a highly qualified individual declined to accept an offer for a division chief position at the park after realizing that the schools did not meet the special needs of his child. Park employees often cite the schools as a major factor in their decision to transfer from Yosemite to other assignments.

The Department has a number of specific concerns regarding the bill. First, the legislation provides for an inappropriate use of recreation fee receipts. In addition, we believe that funds made available to the park for flood recovery should not be made available for purposes of this legislation. We suggest that the bill be amended to provide only for the general upkeep and maintenance of school facilities, not new construction.

Second, the bill allows the Secretary to adjust payments if funding from the State of California or local school districts is reduced. In order to clarify that payments made by the Secretary are intended to supplement, not replace the funding provided by the State, we would suggest that this section be amended and would be happy to work with the Committee.

And finally, the bill authorizes the Secretary to enter into cooperative agreements with the State or local school districts, and we believe that this authority should be limited to circumstances in which the Secretary concurs in the opinion that educational facilities and services cannot reasonably be provided by the State of California or the local school districts that serve the park. Absent this limitation, the legislation would, in effect, provide an incentive for local school districts to cease operating the Yosemite schools, even if they could reasonably continue to staff them.

We believe this legislation is a good start at providing the means to improve the schools in Yosemite National Park and look forward to working with the Committee on identifying an appropriate funding source and clarifying the role of the Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions that you or the members may have.  
[The prepared statement of Mr. Mihalic follows:]

**Statement of David Mihalic, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park,  
National Park Service on H.R. 3421**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H. R. 3421. This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide supplemental funding and other services and facilities that are necessary to assist the State of California or local school districts in providing educational services and facilities for students attending schools located within Yosemite National Park.

While the Department believes that students who attend schools in Yosemite National Park should have access to the same educational services and facilities found elsewhere in the State of California, we are concerned over the source of funds identified to accomplish the purposes of the bill, as well as other provisions in the bill. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to identify an appropriate source of funds, and to clarify certain provisions, but cannot support the bill in its current form. The Administration is generally concerned about the notion of diverting limited park funds to what is essentially a State responsibility. We do not want this to set a precedent that parks should take over responsibility for schools or create an NPS school system.

Schools have been located within Yosemite National Park for over 125 years to serve the needs of park employees and their children. At present, two elementary schools are located within the park at Wawona and in Yosemite Valley. A third elementary school and a small high school are located in El Portal, the park's administrative site located on Federal property just outside the park boundary. Most students attend the larger county high school in Mariposa because of the lack of opportunity for a comprehensive program at the El Portal school.

The Yosemite Valley School has about 46 students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade, divided into three classes. The amount of funding from the State of California, according to a formula based on average daily attendance, actually supports only two teachers, but a third is funded by a one-time special grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The elementary school in El Portal has 50 students in seven grades, divided into multi-graded classrooms. The Wawona school is like the old "one-room" schoolhouse, with 20 children in grades K-S, and one teacher. Because the current funding formula provides for only one teacher, and the maximum teacher/student ratio has been reached, the school is unable to serve more than 20 students. Consequently, there have been instances in which parents were left with the choice of either home-schooling their children or transporting them on their own to schools elsewhere. Some parents have elected these options voluntarily because of the conditions at the Wawona school.

Because the schools in the park are located long distances from the administrative offices of their school districts, there has been limited access to services that are normally available to students that attend schools elsewhere. For example, access to teachers to serve students with special needs is very limited, and road and weather conditions can often further restrict teachers' abilities to reach the park. Subjects such as band, art, music, choir, or even physical education are provided only if parents are able to find additional funding to hire an aide. Many facilities are in need of repair or do not meet standards.

While teachers at the Yosemite schools are as committed as teachers anywhere else, the quality of education that students receive in these schools suffers as a result of lack of funding and staffing. For example, teachers who teach only one grade level can focus on curriculum and standards for that grade, while teachers in the Yosemite schools must spread their time and energy across multiple grade levels. In addition to their educational duties, they must also tend to administrative duties normally performed by other employees. As a result, despite their best efforts, teachers at the Yosemite schools are unable to give the time or attention necessary to provide the quality of education that the students deserve.

Recruitment and retention of employees at Yosemite National Park is also adversely affected by the quality of the park schools. Many highly qualified NPS employees with school age children who might otherwise be interested in applying for jobs at Yosemite are discouraged from doing so because of the school situation. Recently, a highly qualified individual declined to accept an offer for a division chief position at the park after realizing that the schools could not meet the special needs

of his child. Park employees often cite the schools as a major factor in their decision to transfer from Yosemite to other assignments.

The Department has a number of specific concerns regarding this bill. First, the legislation provides for an inappropriate use of recreation fee receipts, particularly since it has no connection to the benefits provided to the visitors who are paying the fee. In addition, we believe that any funds made available to the park for flood recovery should not be available for purposes of this legislation, nor should the bill authorize the use of Federal funds for facility construction. We suggest that the bill be amended to provide only for general upkeep and maintenance of school facilities, not new construction.

Second, the bill allows the Secretary to adjust payments if funding from the State of California or the local school districts is reduced. In order to clarify that payments made by the Secretary are intended to supplement, not replace, the funding provided by the State or local school districts, we would suggest that this section be amended, and would be happy to work with the Committee to develop the appropriate language.

Finally, the bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with the State of California or local school districts for the operation, expansion, or construction of schools located within or near the park at Federal expense. We believe that this authority should be limited to circumstances in which the Secretary concurs in the opinion that educational facilities and services cannot reasonably be provided by the State of California or the local school districts that serve the park. Absent this limitation, the legislation would, in effect, provide an incentive for the local school districts to cease operating the Yosemite schools, even if they could reasonably continue to staff and fund them.

While we strongly believe that the responsibility for providing educational services rests with the State of California, we realize that the quality of education received by the children of park employees and others who attend the Yosemite schools is dependent on the resources of the local school districts. We believe that this legislation is a good start at providing the means to improve the schools in Yosemite National Park, and look forward to working with the Committee on identifying an appropriate funding source and clarifying the role of the Secretary in assisting the State of California and the local school districts with providing educational services and facilities at the park.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. I would be happy to respond to any questions that you or any members of the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. MIHALIC. And then on the—

Mr. RADANOVICH. Go ahead. Please continue.

Mr. MIHALIC. And then on the Golden Chain Highway bill, I will summarize my remarks and ask that the full statement be made a part of the record.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of Interior's views on H.R. 3425. The Department supports this legislation but will not consider requesting funding for the study in this or the next fiscal year so as to focus available time and resources on completing previously authorized studies. As of now, there are 41 authorized studies that are pending and we only expect to complete a few of those this year. We caution that our support of this legislation authorizing a study does not necessarily mean the Department will support designation of a National Heritage Area.

The study would be done in consultation with affected local governments, the State of California, State and local Historic Preservation offices, community organizations, and the Golden Chain Council.

Highway 49 traverses the area where gold was discovered and mined during the California gold rush and passes through the heart of an area that includes communities with many gold rush related structures and sites. The discovery of and search for gold in California transformed the nation. The discovery of gold brought

California into the United States as the 31st State and it prepared the way for the United States to span the width of North America and accelerated the exploration and settlement of the American West.

The National Park Service has had some inquiries in the past year from Historic Preservation groups, nonprofit organizations, and business groups seeking additional information about Heritage Areas in general and a possible Highway 49 Heritage Corridor. A study of the area would allow a determination of the level of support that might exist in the area and would help identify further protection and preservation options.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks and I will be pleased to answer any questions you or members of the Committee may have.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Mihalic.  
[The prepared statement of Mr. Mihalic follows:]

**Statement of David Mihalic, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park,  
National Park Service on H.R. 3425**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H. R. 3425. This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of establishing Highway 49 in California, known as the "Golden Chain Highway", as a National Heritage Corridor.

The Department supports this legislation, but will not consider requesting funding for the study in this or the next fiscal year so as to focus available time and resources on completing previously authorized studies. As of now, there are 41 authorized studies that are pending, and we only expect to complete a few of those this year. We caution that our support of this legislation authorizing a study does not necessarily mean that the Department will support designation of this National Heritage Area. The Administration is determined to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog in national parks, but the costs of new parks or other commitments, such as grants for new National Heritage Areas, could divert funds from taking care of current responsibilities. Furthermore, in order to better plan for the future of our National Parks, we believe that any such studies should carefully examine the full life cycle operation and maintenance costs that would result from each alternative considered.

H. R. 3425 requires the National Park Service to complete a special resource study on the national significance, suitability, and feasibility of establishing Highway 49 in California as a National Heritage Corridor. The study would be done in consultation with affected local governments, the State of California, state and local historic preservation offices, community organizations, and the Golden Chain Council.

The bill would require the study to include an analysis of the significance of Highway 49 in California from the city of Oakhurst in Madera County to the city of Vinton in Plumas County. The study would examine the lands, structures, and cultural resources within the immediate vicinity of the highway, options for preservation and use of the highway, and options for interpretation of significant features associated with the highway. The bill would also require the study to examine alternatives for preservation of these resources by the private sector.

Highway 49 traverses the area where gold was discovered and mined during the California Gold Rush, and passes through the heart of an area that includes communities with many Gold Rush-related structures and sites. It is the principle route of travel linking these major Gold Rush sites, and provides access to numerous State Historic Parks and museums related to the Gold Rush.

The discovery of and search for gold in California transformed the nation. "Gold fever" was a national experience, spreading throughout the country and the world and precipitating a massive migration to California. The discovery of gold brought California into the United States as the 31st state, preparing the way for the United States to span the width of the North American continent, and accelerating the exploration and settlement of the American West. Legends and literature have expanded the reach of the Gold Rush story, through the work of nationally significant writers such as Mark Twain and Bret Harte.

The area along Highway 49 retains many Gold Rush-era resources, including two National Historic Landmark Districts in the towns of Columbia and Coloma, and numerous properties and districts that are included on the National Register of Historic Places. The State of California has recognized the significance of this area through the establishment of several State Historic Parks and mining museums, and designation of Highway 49 as a State heritage corridor and a State scenic highway. Many of the towns along Highway 49 retain much of their historic integrity, and have sought to preserve and promote their Gold Rush history.

As we have testified previously before this Subcommittee, there are several steps we believe should be taken prior to Congress designating a national heritage area to help ensure that the heritage area is successful. Those steps are:

1. completion of a suitability/feasibility study;
2. public involvement in the suitability/feasibility study;
3. demonstration of widespread public support among heritage area residents for the proposed designation; and
4. commitment to the proposal from the appropriate players which may include governments, industry, and private, non-profit organizations, in addition to the local citizenry.

The National Park Service has had some inquiries in the past year from historic preservation groups, non-profit organizations, and business groups seeking additional information about heritage areas in general and a possible Highway 49 Heritage Corridor. A study of the area would allow a determination of the level of support that might exist in the area and would help identify further protection and preservation options. A critical element of the study will be to evaluate the integrity of the resources and the nationally distinctive character of the region before recommending national heritage area designation.

We would suggest a technical amendment to clarify that the city of Vinton is located in Plumas County.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I would like, if there is no objection from the Committee, to defer the first questions regarding Virginia Key to Mrs. Meek. Carrie, if you would like to begin that, that would be great.

Mrs. MEEK. Thank you very much, and thank you, member of the National Park Service.

I am a little concerned and also disappointed with the National Park Service looking at a paucity of historical civil rights parks that the Service would not sooner than now recognize that this is a need in this country, to try and have this open so that all members of this country will understand the history of this country, and another civil rights park would mean quite a bit toward that goal, it would appear to me.

I pretty much know the history of the Park Service, having served on your board for many years. I am yet to understand why you would need a study from the Congress to impose upon you to do such a study. It would appear to me that you would want to do this and it would be one of your requests that you would give to this Committee sooner than now.

I would ask you to give me some rationale as to why it is so late in terms of your history to request this, not only not to request it, but to indicate that you would not want such a study done until 2005, and then knowing that you are already falling some odd studies behind, that this becomes a part of antiquity before such a study is made and before such a park is built.

I think the Service needs to come up more or less to date with what is going on in America today, to look at the population. Look at the ethnicity of people who attend your parks and you will notice that very few Hispanics, very few blacks, very few Asians. This

is your new population. You are not back in the 1960's and 1970's, as when I served on your commission. You are now in the 1980's and the 1990's and 2000's and I am just hoping the Service would come to that point.

So my question is, when will the Park Service begin to look at these kinds of things and make recommendations on its own to the Congress for such an advancement?

Mr. MIHALIC. Mrs. Meek, I very much appreciate your remarks and I think that the Department's position on this should not be construed as having anything to do with the merits of this particular bill in terms of the civil rights nature. We are presently engaged in a theme study, as I am sure you are aware, on civil rights actions and that has resulted in a number of other areas already, the Selma Bridge, for example, and Tuskegee Airmen and Brown v. Board of Education in Kansas, and those sites have come into the system.

I believe that in this particular instance, the date is merely predicated on the fact that we have so many other requests from Congress to do other studies. I do not think it has anything to do with the merits of the study for Virginia Key Park.

Mrs. MEEK. If I may go a little further, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that particular answer and I am sure it is a valid one. Yet, on the other hand, among all the studies that you have, it appears that the Service should look at the methodology by which you are conducting these studies to see that, after all of these years, you have been unable to catch up. That, to me, would be a mandate for the Service, to look at some means of changing your methodology so you could not only do the studies, but if you do not do the studies, find some other methodology to determine how you are going to face that. That is all I need to say, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you.

Mrs. MEEK. Thank you so much.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Ms. Meek.

Mrs. MEEK. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mrs. Christensen?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. On H.R. 3421, is Yosemite National Park unique in having employee children attend the local schools?

Mr. MIHALIC. I believe it is unique in that there are only a handful of parks that have schools within the park, and in Yosemite's case, while there are some parks that have one school within the park, in Yosemite's case, it actually has three elementary schools and a small high school located at Wawona in Yosemite Valley inside the park, and then at El Portal administrative site, which is on Federal land just outside.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. In your statement, you had said that there were several provisions that needed to be clarified. Are you talking about the fact that there should be supplemental funding and that the funding for the school should not come out of the fee program? Are those the clarifications? You said there were certain provisions that needed to be clarified within the bill. What were those?

Mr. MIHALIC. I believe it was the funding source, and then also to ensure that the money was intended to supplement funds provided by the State or local school districts, and then also to ensure that the Secretary would not be in a position of determining wheth-

er schools were adequate, but would concur in the opinion of school districts in the State of California. It was to clarify the Secretary's role.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. What would, if you know the answer to this, what is the expected annual contribution of funds to these particular schools?

Mr. MIHALIC. Right now, there are some who feel that it would be on the order of a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year per school. The schools range in size from one of the schools with 20 students but nine grades, K through eight, literally the one-room schoolhouse, up to the two elementary schools have about 50 students each. They are right at the point where less than 50 students, they only have two teachers for multiple grades. Over 50 students, they can get a third teacher.

But the situation is such that many people have either chosen to home school their children or to take their kids out of school and drive them someplace else because it is very difficult. The teachers are committed, and try as they might, it is difficult for teachers to meet present day standards for three, four, or even eight grades and really give the kids, the students, the attention they deserve.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I can imagine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mrs. Christensen.

Mr. Souder?

Mr. SOUDER. Having visited Yosemite, I certainly see the pressures on Yosemite's school system. Grand Canyon has a similar school similarly a long way from the entrance, particularly as we have dropped the speed limits into the center of the parks, for justifiable reasons, it takes longer to get to the center of those parks. Yellowstone would have similar. I do not know whether Mesa Verde has a school, but certainly all their Park Service housing is somewhere between 45 minutes and an hour from the edge of the park.

One thing you can immediately see if you would go through Yosemite, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, and Mesa Verde is that many of the pinnacle parks in the Park System that superintendents and other people would strive to work at, in effect become a limitation on families with children. At the same time, this is a difficult question to resolve because this becomes ever increasingly expensive when you try to deal with IDEA, computer type of things, and I am not sure how we do this and I am not necessarily willing to say that all employees should be moved out of the heart of the park, which is one of the trends, because then you have incredible commuting questions in, service questions for the population.

There is not an easy resolution to this, but I would suggest it is not just a Yosemite problem. It is unique because of the multiple schools, but my guess is there may be places in Alaska, any place there is a big park that is kind of off in the pinnacle of the Park System.

I wanted to share a concern about using demonstration fees, which I think are one of the greatest innovations, and part of the public support is that they see a reduction in backlog maintenance, and to the degree it becomes operating, we are going to have some problem sustaining that, which I believe is an excellent concept which has enabled us to do much in our national parks. And if we

are not clear on what that fee and how that fee is used, we could get into a real murky situation nationally.

Other than that, it is your district and your important problem, but I wanted to share a couple thoughts, that it does go beyond your district, too.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much. And to clarify, the issue really is an appropriations issue, much like T-21 was, for something like this. The school district is looking for a committed stream that may not be subject every year to an appropriations. The Appropriations Committees, of course, do not like to make commitments beyond 1 year in many cases.

So we are working with the Department of Interior to develop language that we think will work and be noncontroversial. It is our desire to create something that we could move through on a suspension calendar, meaning that everybody would be pleased and happy and supportive of it. So we are going to continue our dialog to make sure we can come up with that kind of language and, hopefully, take care of the education needs of park employees inside the park.

You mentioned the transportation issues. Of course, in Yosemite, nothing is ever very clear. In some cases, it does make sense to move people out of the park and transport them in, but that does not mean you can move everybody. There are some people that should stay in the park and, therefore, have educational needs for their kids.

Yosemite is one of those ideal places where something seems simple at first, but the more you get into it, the more complicated it is. But it is a beautiful place and we want to take care of the people that work there.

Are there any other questions of Mr. Mihalic?

[No response.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. If not, Mr. Mihalic, thank you so much for being here. We appreciate your testimony on all the issues.

Mr. MIHALIC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RADANOVICH. With that, we have a vote going on. It is on the Department of Defense authorization conference report. It is only one vote, so we are going to recess just for a minute and go over and vote and everybody is encouraged to be right back here. We will start our third panel. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. We are back in session. I would like to introduce our third panel. We have Mr. Brian Rooney, who is President of RVETS, or Remembering Veterans Who Earned Their Stripes, from Northridge, California, to speak on H.R. 2748. We also have Mr. Max Stauffer, who is Chairman of the Bass Lake School District in Fish Camp, California, and Mr. Kevin Kelly is a member of the Mariposa County School Board from Mariposa, California, a great place where I happened to be born.

Welcome, gentlemen. I appreciate your making the trip here to Washington to testify on these important bills. What I would like to do is have everybody testify on each one and then we will open it up for questions. We will begin with you, Mr. Stauffer, and if you would like to introduce any support group that you have with you, we would be happy to hear about that.

**STATEMENT OF MAX STAUFFER, CHAIRMAN, BASS LAKE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT, FISH CAMP, CALIFORNIA**

Mr. STAUFFER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to do that. It is an honor to be here today. Thank you for giving us the time. The parents in the communities in our school district appreciate the time, also.

At this time, I would like to introduce the teaching principal at Wawona, Dr. Michelle Horner. She has been there about 21 years. She has expertise in education with the countless years she has been at that school. Also, Dr. Pizello, who was our superintendent at the Bass Lake School District for 10 years and now has served us as a consultant for the last 5 years. He has been very involved in this issue and just really cares about kids. They are great people.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Great. Thank you.

Mr. STAUFFER. Thank you. They will be available to answer any questions. They have tremendous expertise.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Max, before you get going, we have got a clock here. There is a green light. The yellow light means speed up. Red means stop. We would like to hold everybody to 5 minutes or less on their opening statements. I am not a real cop about this thing, but if you can stick within the 5 minutes, that would be just fine.

Mr. STAUFFER. Sure. The Bass Lake School District serves families in the Sierra Nevada Mountain communities of Awani, Bass Lake, Oakhurst, Fish Camp, Sugar Pine, and Wawona. The district is comprised of six schools with an enrollment of 1,200 students. Our boundaries stretch over 360 square miles, with elevations ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 feet.

Wawona School, located in Yosemite National Park, is our smallest site, with an enrollment of 20 students, many of whom are children of National Park and Yosemite concessions employees. The school is isolated from the rest of the district by over 20 miles of mountainous roads that can be treacherous during the winter months. Travel to the district office in Oakhurst and back can be an impossible task during heavy snows or rain.

Wawona is a one-room classroom, a school with one teaching principal covering seven grade levels, kindergarten through sixth. She is an extremely committed and caring individual who works tirelessly to provide the best education possible under very difficult circumstances. Because of its size and geographical location, Wawona School is very difficult to serve equitably. Services such as special education, speech services, reading remediation, fine arts, foreign language, and library services are very limited or not provided at all. While students at our other sites have these programs available, because of the distance and difficulty of travel, staffing of these services is cost prohibitive.

The Bass Lake School District currently runs Wawona at a \$100,000 deficit because State funding does not take into consideration the uniqueness of its location and multi-grade teaching environment. Because the deficit affects the ability to provide an education to the other 1,180 students in the district, there is pressure from some to close Wawona School. This situation is no longer acceptable to the parents or trustees serving them. The projected

\$12.5 billion California budget shortfall severely compounds our problem.

Over the past year, parents, community members, administrators, and school board members from both the Bass Lake School District and the Mariposa School District have been meeting to solve some of the education problems facing the schools in the park. Superintendent Mihalic has been very helpful and cooperative in our search for solutions. With the help of Congressman Radanovich and his staff, we are closer to resolving our problems.

The solution involves a high level of cooperation between the two school districts and the Park Superintendent. It involves allowing funds from the National Park to be used to help improve the educational opportunities for its employees' children. Yellowstone Park has a system in place whereby the Park Service actually contributes to the school district. Similar legislation would allow the Secretary of the Interior to enter into voluntary agreements with the two local school districts.

The additional funding provided for within these agreements would be used to increase the level of service for special education students, help make up the deficit factor that impacts other schools in the district, provide for after school tutorials, implement reading intervention in the primary grades, and implement gifted and talented programs and bring in specialists for fine arts, science, and physical education. This solution would begin a process to solve educational problems that have been in existence for several decades. The Bass Lake School District Board of Trustees enthusiastically support H.R. 3421.

Ladies and gentlemen, this issue is not about inflating school bureaucracy, nor is it about increasing teacher salaries. This issue is about equity. It is about the kids in Yosemite. They deserve a quality education. We respectfully ask for your support of H.R. 3421. Again, thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stauffer follows:]

**Statement of Max Stauffer, President, Board of Trustees, Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District**

The bill before you addresses identified needs of students attending schools created to educate children of Yosemite National Park employees, concessionaire employees, and families living within and adjacent to the boundaries of the Yosemite National Park. Because of the size of the schools, the placement of those schools, and the methods of funding for all schools within the state of California, there have been many parents who feel that students within those schools are at a disadvantage. Simply put, state funding of very small schools has been inadequate. This problem has been facing Yosemite for decades. Turnover in park management, school board membership, and parents within the schools have worked against addressing those problems.

Parents, community members, administrators, and school board members from both the Bass Lake School District and the Mariposa School District have been meeting to solve some of the educational problems attendant to the schools located in the Yosemite National Park. The park superintendent has been kind enough to work with these people to help find solutions. In that vein we have been working with Congressman Radanovich to address our needs. A brief description of the problems is delineated below.

The Bass Lake Joint Union Elementary School District is one of two districts tasked with providing educational opportunities for the children of Yosemite Park employees and the employees of concessionaires within the Park. The Wawona School comprises approximately 1.6% of the total enrollment of The Bass Lake School District. The Mariposa Unified School District is the other school district serving Yosemite National Park. The El Portal and Yosemite Valley Schools con-

stitute approximately 3.8% of the enrollment of the Mariposa Unified School District. While both school districts have dedicated a far greater percentage of the total district budget to service the children of park children than is generated, the nature of the schools and where they are placed creates severe problems in terms of equitable educational opportunity.

For instance, Wawona School, with 20 children, has a need for special education services for one and sometimes two students. Children with special needs in other schools receive daily attention for half an hour at a time and the district is able to do that because there are enough children to warrant having a full time teacher at a site. There are not enough children with need at Wawona to justify a full time or even half time teacher for the site. The distance to Wawona and the travel time necessary to bring a teacher from a population center to Wawona during inclement weather, however, make it impossible to hire an employee for part time work. No one is willing to commit to that travel for the small amount of available work time. Similarly, it is impossible to take time from another employee and assign that person to Wawona because much of their available work time would be dedicated to travel. The financially driven solution then is that the students with need only receive services once per week rather than on a daily basis. This is not an educationally acceptable solution. Similar problems occur in the areas a specialty reading problems, speech and hearing needs, music, after school tutoring, 1st grade reading intervention, and a myriad of other programs generally available to most students. The Mariposa School District faces the same difficulties. The Bass Lake School District currently runs that school at over a \$100,000 per year deficit because of the size and distance factors. Because the deficit affects the ability to provide an education to the other 1180 students in the district, there is pressure to close the school. This in, turn, would exacerbate the problem of educational quality for National Park families.

As budget restrictions have become more and more common, it has become more difficult to justify the current level of expenditures even though educational opportunity equity might demand an increase in funding. The State of California has gone from having a 12 billion-dollar surplus to a 12 billion-dollar deficit in the last six months.

The two districts have been working with the parents, the school boards of the two districts, the administrations, and the representatives from the National Park Service to cooperatively find solutions to the educational and fiscal difficulties that the districts confront. It has been gratifying to see such a large group of people, with such diverse interests, come together for a common cause. It appears that, through the diligence of David Mihalic (the Yosemite National Park Superintendent) and the parents and community members within and adjacent to Yosemite National Park, a set of solutions may be possible.

It is important to note that both the Mariposa and the Bass Lake School Districts have made tremendous efforts to solve the funding problems. They are constrained however, by the budgetary restrictions attendant to running larger school districts.

Recruitment of personnel in Yosemite National Park depends, to some degree, on being able to offer a first class education to children of those personnel. For this reason it is in the best interest of the National Park Service to team up with the parents and the school districts. And they have done that.

The Yellowstone National Park faced similar problems and came up with a solution for their problems with specific legislation. (P.L. 80-604;62 Stat. 338) This legislation allowed Yellowstone to assist in providing educational opportunities. Similar legislation would allow the Yosemite National Park administration to enter into voluntary agreements with the two local school districts. Those agreements would be designed to not only assist the school districts with supplemental funding but to allow for better educational opportunities. The additional funding provided for within these agreements would be used to increase the level of service for special education students, make up the deficit factor that impacts other schools in the district, provide for after school tutorials, implement reading intervention in the primary grades, implement gifted and talented programs, and bring in specialists for music, science, and physical education. It is our understanding that these funding solutions would have no impact on the Federal budget because the source of funding comes from existing available dollars.

This solution would begin a process to solve educational problems that have been in existence for several decades. Needless to say, the Bass Lake School District Board of Trustees and the Mariposa Board of Trustees enthusiastically support this legislation.

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Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you, Mr. Stauffer.

Mr. Kelly, welcome.

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN KELLY, MEMBER, MARIPOSA COUNTY  
SCHOOL BOARD, MARIPOSA, CALIFORNIA**

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am here today to represent my interests as it relates to H.R. 3421, and I believe I am in a unique position to speak on the need of this bill as I wear several hats as it relates to Yosemite National Park and our need to provide adequate schools.

I am a community member of Yosemite National Park. I live in the valley with my wife and family. I have three young children. One is in kindergarten and one is in the third grade. I am on the Board of Trustees for the Mariposa County Unified School District and I am also Vice President for Yosemite Concession Services, the primary concessionaire in Yosemite National Park.

As a stakeholder in Yosemite, I am concerned at the quality of education being afforded our children as compared to other schools in our district. Living and working in a national park should not come at the sacrifice of our children's education. The bill before you will help correct the current inequities that exist.

My school district has many challenges in educating the students of Mariposa County. We adhere to a standards-based curriculum. We provide transportation services in a large mountainous county, and we do this with a limited budget.

Now, translate the curriculum challenge to my daughter, Kaitlyn's, third grade teacher, Susan Lieberman. Ms. Lieberman has to prepare two lesson plans every day, one for the five third graders and one for the 11 fourth graders in her classroom. It takes time, talent, and imagination for a teacher to design curriculum for a single classroom containing more than one grade. Ms. Lieberman also acts as part-time secretary, part-time lunchtime supervisor. She is the nurse, counselor, everything, all while preparing our children for advancement to the next grade.

Our transportation issue are strictly a geography problem: Thirteen schools spread over 1,400 square miles in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the Yosemite schools are located at the end of the trail. This has created a challenge for the schools to receive comparable services from the district, such as music, science, special needs classes, as most of the teaching time is used up in the 2-hour round-trip drive to the park.

Funding for Mariposa County Unified School District is based on average daily attendance. This method of funding is great for large urban districts that benefit from the efficiencies of scale. However, the small rural districts do not enjoy the same benefits. To that end, the multi-grade elementary schools at Yosemite do not operate efficiently. Our schools are small, with less than 50 children, and we are located an hour from the district office and support services.

The schools exist because Yosemite National Park exists. The National Park and its contractors in Yosemite require many of their employees to live in the park to meet the mission of the agency, and that is to preserve and protect the park and to provide services for park visitors. We are in a very competitive market for quality employees. No longer is income the deciding factor in ac-

cepting a job. Quality goods and services available in the community is extremely important to the recruitment and retention of employees in Yosemite, and schools are at the top of their list.

The needs are clear and the opportunity is now, and I believe the bill before you is the vehicle to establish equity for our children. The use of park entrance fees seems appropriate. The children of Yosemite have accepted their roles as stewards of the park. They have a recycling program, a docent program. They developed their own guide for other schools who visit the park.

Yosemite National Park has programs for visiting schools, where hundreds of schools and thousands of children participate in the Yosemite experience. These visiting schools do not pay entrance fees. In essence, you are giving them the value of the entrance fee. All we ask is that you give the school children of Yosemite National Park the same consideration and not penalize them for living in and caring for Yosemite National Park. Thank you.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Kelly.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kelly follows:]

**Statement of Kevin T. Kelly, Member, Board of Education, Mariposa County Unified School District**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify on this important piece of legislation.

The Mariposa County Unified School District serves thirteen school sites spread out over Mariposa County, which encompasses a total of 1,435 square miles. Three school sites are located in or nearby Yosemite National Park. Yosemite Valley Elementary School serves around 46, K-8 students while El Portal Elementary serves around 47, K-6 students. A small necessary high school, Yosemite Park High School is also located on the El Portal Elementary campus. There has been a long tradition of public school education in Yosemite National Park.

The availability of these schools to the children of Yosemite Park employees is very important. Without these schools in place elementary age children of Yosemite Park employees would have to travel 61 miles roundtrip from El Portal and 92 miles roundtrip from Yosemite Valley to attend school in Mariposa. Travel for these students would be over curving mountain roads in school buses with numerous changes in altitude. It was determined in 1948 to form a unified county system of public education in Mariposa County. This decision was determined by a vote of the people in order to better distribute the taxpayer's dollar with the advantages not offered by any other plan.

These advantages included at the time:

- A basis for county-wide salary schedule for teachers
- Greatest flexibility for adjustment to shifts in population and wealth
- A basis for a single to and from school transportation system
- The maximum financial support for all children
- An equal tax burden for all
- A basis for present or future consolidation of attendance centers with consideration of health and safety
- A basis for lateral and vertical coordination of the educational program from kindergarten through the twelfth grade
- A basis for the strongest program of vocational education

Over 50 years later these core values are among the many that continue for us today regarding public education in Mariposa County.

Today, Mariposa County Unified School District remains a small county unified district of approximately 2,600 students with no large county office to offer support but must face the same challenges and responsibilities. More often than not these challenges currently go unmet due to a lack of resources. These lack of resources especially impact our small multi-graded elementary schools such as El Portal and Yosemite Valley Elementary. Supplemental funding is needed to offset encroachment on the budget regarding ever increasing special education needs, attracting quality teachers through a competitive salary schedule, to and from school bus transportation, professional staff development, counseling, fine arts instruction, nursing care, psychological services, gifted and talented education, improving technology, maintenance and utility costs.

Compounding these challenges is a need to provide a rigorous standards based education to the children of the above mentioned schools. Teachers in these multi-graded schools must not only deal with designing standards based lessons to one specific grade level, they are often faced with the task of designing lessons to meet the needs of two or three grade levels. A reduction in staff at Yosemite Valley School from the current staff of three teachers to two teachers next year would severely reduce the amount of time teachers could focus on delivering an adequate amount of instruction specifically focused on individual grade levels.

In the past many students had been “promoted” automatically to the next grade level. This past practice is no longer acceptable as the Mariposa County Unified School District has raised the bar by having in place promotion and retention standards. Students who meet these standards will be promoted to the next grade level. Students who do not meet these standards will be retained. Two teachers at the Yosemite Valley Elementary School will certainly not be as effective as having three teachers available, through supplemental funding, to assist in meeting the needs of students who are at risk of not being promoted.

As noted above, students in small rural schools such as Yosemite Valley Elementary and El Portal Elementary are faced with being placed in double or at times triple graded classes each year. These students can be at a distinct disadvantage compared to their peers at larger schools because they do not receive the same amount of direct grade level instruction. Special incentives through supplemental funding are needed for multi-graded staff development opportunities and additional instructional aides to support teachers in these small extremely rural schools.

There is often a reduced amount of categorical funding available at schools with small enrollments simply because family incomes are not necessarily always at or below the Federal free and reduced lunch level needed for a school to qualify.

It is not unusual to find, in small rural school settings such as Yosemite Valley and El Portal, families where both parents are college educated and have high skill/high wage employment. Children of such families often have the benefit of quality preschool education and special educational enriching activities prior to entering kindergarten. These students are primed for academic success in school and often have the talents to qualify for such programs as gifted and talented education (GATE). However, it is often difficult for a teacher with multiple grade levels, who is stressed for time, to give adequate attention to his or her GATE students without additional staffing support. The special needs of the low achieving students, as noted previously, tend to be given a higher priority than those of the GATE students. Supplemental funding for gifted and talented education is of critical importance to the children of Yosemite Valley Elementary, El Portal Elementary, and Yosemite High Schools. We need to invest soundly in our brightest students at the same time we are striving to close the achievement gap between our lowest achieving and highest achieving students.

Education reforms require schools to utilize new teaching and learning styles, which include the need for laboratory classrooms and flexible areas for instruction. A U.S. General Accounting Office 1995 study noted that rural schools nation-wide have inadequate science laboratory facilities in 37% of their schools. Rural schools nation-wide note that 40% of their schools have inadequate space for large—group instruction and 13% report inadequate library/ media centers. Supplemental funding is crucial to provide new facilities/equipment and maintenance of current facilities/equipment in these three schools.

Dr. W. Edwards Deming, noted that quality is built into a product. Quality cannot be added on at the end but must be something integral to the product or result—such as our high school graduates. If we in education are to have continuous comprehensive improvement of effective curriculum and instructional strategies, we must build quality into sustained, meaningful staff development. This staff development is even more critical for our teachers who must teach in a multi-graded classroom setting due to limited resources. The task of organizing accountability assessment data with multiple measures aligned to multi-grade level standards can be accomplished in large measure only by teachers and school site teacher/principals given supplemental funding to purchase the right training and tools. This action can place responsibility in the hands of our teachers who are closest to the most important activity of the educational enterprise, quality instruction.

We have the passion and the commitment to move further into an era of raising the academic bar higher for all of our students. Our resources are limited and an ever-increasing encroachment on these resources threatens our ability to deliver the quality of instruction we desire. Therefore, it is paramount that supplemental funding for Yosemite Valley Elementary, El Portal Elementary and Yosemite Park High School be considered at this time.

All of our roads in education must lead to quality instruction.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this critical issue. I would be happy to answer any questions you or any of the Members have.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Now on another bill, H.R. 2748, I want to introduce Mr. Rooney. Thank you for being here and please begin your testimony on the veterans' monuments issue.

**STATEMENT OF BRIAN ROONEY, PRESIDENT, RVETS (REMEMBERING VETERANS WHO EARNED THEIR STRIPES), NORTHRIDGE, CALIFORNIA**

Mr. ROONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congresswoman Christensen. I want to start by saying that the Department's representative is a typical reaction that I get. It was my first reaction when I began this project 6 years ago. I want to remind the Committee that we are not talking about concrete and brass but we are talking about real live people.

In fact, this project started 31 years ago on a medevac helipad in Vietnam when I, as an Army medic, was triaging the wounded. I noticed a GI that was well beyond my help and unconscious. I leaned over his body to get his name, and as I did, he grabbed my shirt, opened his eyes, pulled me toward him, and whispered, "Remember me." The face of that soldier has haunted me these 31 years. In fact, I live with the memory of the faces of dying soldiers.

To honor those memories, I created the "Remember Me" project, which is intended to catalog and monitor the condition of every tribute to armed conflict in the United States. I am also the founder of RVETS, which is a nonprofit disabled veterans' organization.

Since 1996, RVETS has identified and cataloged more than 8,600 tributes to the service of our armed forces throughout the United States. Our goal is to verify, research, and make available especially the story of every person behind every memorial.

In the beginning, RVETS consisted of my family and me. In 6 years, I have mailed out about 30,000 letters to every municipality and city in the United States, as well as veterans' organizations and patriotic organizations inquiring about their local memorials. Our home has become a clearinghouse for memorials from every corner of America. My kids do not know what it is like to sit down at dinner without a stack of envelopes and stuff. The fax machine in our home has not stopped ringing for 5 years.

But over those years, the RVETS group has evolved to a confederation of over 1,000 people worldwide who all share the same goal in mind, that the memory of those who fought for our freedom would not be lost. Unfortunately, many of those tributes are in a sad state of disrepair and lost, but it is not the tribute that is lost, it is the stories that are lost, stories that our children ought to hear.

For example, one of the virtually millions of stories is the Henry Johnson story. He was an African American soldier in World War I who, while on guard duty in France, was attacked and overrun by a group of Germans. The Germans shot Henry and carried off his friend, Private Roberts, for interrogation. Henry awoke a few moments later to find himself wounded 21 times. Yet he got up and lit out after the Germans and single-handedly attacked them. He killed several of them with his rifle, several more with his bayonet,

and several more with his service knife. The rest of the troop ran off.

Henry then picked up his comrade and carried him back to his medics. Although wounded 21 times, Henry still went back to his post and served out his remaining 6 hours of guard duty until relieved, and then sought medical attention for himself. Henry was the first American ever to win the Quadigere Francis Hyas Award for Valor. That Henry Johnson memorial stands in Albany, New York.

Other tributes are not so lucky. In Ione, California, there stood an honor roll with the names of casualties of World War I and II. The plaque hung on the side of city hall until the building was sold in the early 1950's. Local newspaper articles chronicled the movement of the memorial from place to place until it was simply lost. That tribute to those brave soldiers and their stories that it memorialized are lost forever.

RVETS has taken just the first steps toward a larger effort to tell stories behind every tribute to ensure that no more are lost. Congressman Dreier introduced H.R. 2748 to help RVETS in our work and to authorize the programs supported by the 106th Congress, which on June 26 of last year passed House Concurrent Resolution 345, introduced by then-Congressman Jim Rogan. That resolution identified a debt of gratitude owed to veterans for their sacrifices in defending our nation during times of war and peace. It called upon the Department of the Interior to create and maintain a data base of permanent tributes to the armed forces.

The House Committee on Resources passed the resolution by unanimous consent and the House passed it by voice vote. It was ultimately added to then House Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's S. 964 and was signed into law on November 13, 2000. H.R. 2748 would honor the commitment made by the 106th Congress to our veterans by authorizing the program.

As President Bush said on the 3-month anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, memorials are something we can show our children as yet unborn to help them understand. America owes a debt to those who have fought and died for our liberty. So with your support, we can make the data base a reality and ensure that no more tributes to those sacrifices are lost. With your help, H.R. 2748 will enable us to pay that debt.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my two boys that traveled from California to be with me, Damon and my son Noah, who is an expert letter stuffer. Thank you so much.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Rooney.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rooney follows:]

**Statement of Brian Rooney, President, RVETS, Inc.**

*Introduction*

Chairman Radanovich, Congresswoman Christian-Christensen, Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Brian Rooney. I am a high school teacher in the Los Angeles Public Schools system. I am also the founder of a nonprofit, disabled-veterans organization named RVETS, Inc. (Remembering Veterans Who Earned Their Stripes) and the creator of the "Remember Me..." project, intended to catalog and monitor every tribute to armed conflict in the United States. Thank you very much for inviting me to testify today on Chairman David Dreier's National War Permanent Tribute His-

torical Database Act (H.R. 2748). I am greatly honored to be before the Subcommittee.

Since 1995, RVETS has researched, identified, and cataloged more than 8,600 tributes to the service of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Our vision is to make available information about the location, history, and story behind each of the nation's tributes. In the process, we have found that, sadly, many of the physical tributes have already been lost and with them their stories of courage and patriotism.

At today's hearing, I hope to leave you with three points:

1. Our nation's tributes to America's Armed Forces are at grave risk of being lost;
2. Veterans and community organizations have begun to work to catalog, monitor, and preserve our tributes; and
3. The Federal government can assist our efforts with legislation like Chairman David Dreier's National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act (H.R. 2748).

#### *Tributes to Patriotism*

Courageous men and women have fought and died for this great country from before the signing of the Declaration of Independence to today's War on Terrorism. We are approaching close to one million dead who gave their lives to preserve freedom. To commemorate their service, states, counties, cities, and towns across America have erected tributes to the heroism of these patriots of freedom. While those memorials were intended to be permanent, many are lost every year. Some are lost to neglect, others to vandalism, some to redevelopment, and some to apathy. RVETS has worked for more than six years with the goal of first cataloging the tributes, then monitoring the condition of the monuments, and ultimately to tell the story of each and every hero represented on the tributes.

On this Subcommittee sit representatives from California, the Virgin Islands, Michigan, Tennessee, American Samoa, Colorado, New Jersey, Maryland, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, Utah, Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, Nevada, Indiana, Minnesota, and Idaho. RVETS has located a total of 3,149 tributes from these states alone. With the help of this Subcommittee and the Administration, RVETS and other veterans and community organizations will be able to continue our work to produce a comprehensive catalog of the permanent tributes in America to the defenders of freedom, and stem the loss of any more symbols of our heritage.

The risk of losing these memorials is real. For example, the mining town of Hia-watha, Utah had a World War I and World War II memorial. In 1989 the mine closed, and the town was abandoned. Fortunately, the tribute was relocated to Price City, Utah, where it stands today.

Texaco memorialized its employees who gave their lives in World War II on a plaque that was displayed at one of its refineries near Los Angeles, California. The refinery was closed, and the site demolished. An RVETS associate visited the demolition site and noticed the tarnished plaque buried in the rubble. He literally pulled this tribute to American heroes from the junk heap. I am happy to report that this is one story with a happy ending. The beautifully restored plaque now hangs prominently in Patriotic Hall in Los Angeles, California.

These tributes are the lucky ones. They were saved so that the stories behind these tributes are not lost or forgotten.

Not every tribute to liberty is so lucky. In the small town of Ione, California there stood a four-by-eight foot honor roll with the names of the casualties of World War I and World War II. The plaque hung on the side of City Hall until the building was sold and the offices moved. Local newspaper articles chronicled the movement from site to site of the plaque until it was simply lost. That tribute to the memory of those brave soldiers of war is lost.

The process of collecting information about our nation's tributes to our patriots began with a vision— a vision that never again will a memorial or permanent tribute be lost or forgotten. The work done by RVETS since 1995 is but one step toward a larger effort that will enable the public to obtain information about any memorial or tribute. It will aid historians in their research about specific conflicts and help families seek information about their ancestors. It will rekindle a sense of patriotism and encourage every American to reaffirm their appreciation of our heritage. As one staff member at the Library of Congress said of the project, "Your work will change for the better the way Americans view their country over the next fifty years."

Over the years that I have worked on cataloging our nation's memorials, I have come to realize that the tributes that we must save are more than just lifeless masses of concrete and brass. They need not be saved in and of themselves. We must save these memorials because each represents a story. Each represents a bat-

tle waged by American men and women. Each represents the sacrifices of the warriors sent into battle in defense of our country. Each represents the prices paid—many times the ultimate price—by America's Armed Forces.

A Texas citizen named Russell A. Steindam, as a 1st Lt. in the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War, threw himself on a grenade. He sacrificed his life to save his command staff. There is a permanent tribute to him at the University of Texas that serves as a reminder of his story to all who pass.

Or the remarkable story of Henry Johnson, an African American soldier in World War I, who while on guard duty in France with his friend was overrun by a troop of Germans. The Germans shot the two soldiers and carried off Henry's friend for interrogation. Henry awoke a couple of minutes later to find himself wounded 21 times, yet he lit out after the German troop and single-handedly attacked them in their trenches. Henry killed six with his rifle, stabbed several more with his bayonet, and was engaging others with his knife when the balance of the German troop ran off. Henry picked up his wounded comrade and carried him back across no-man's-land and delivered him to the medics. Although he was wounded 21 times, Henry still went back to his guard post and unbelievably finished his guard duty until relieved. The Henry Johnson memorial stands in Albany, New York, erected after his death.

Early in my efforts, I was contacted by a woman who had a picture of her father taken in the early 1950s somewhere in the Pacific. Her father was standing next to a memorial that bore the name of her brother who had been killed in World War II. Her father died shortly after the picture was taken. The woman contact me because she wanted to make a pilgrimage with her six remaining siblings and their children and grandchildren to that memorial. Unfortunately, she knew nothing about its location. From the research RVETS had completed at the time, I was able to tell her that the site was located on one of the Hawaiian Islands. The family, numbering about thirty-five, made the pilgrimage to Hawaii, found the memorial, and was able to preserve an important link to their family's rich history of service to America.

#### *Veterans and Community Organizations' Efforts*

In 1995, in an effort to assist in the upkeep of veterans' memorials in California, I discovered that there was no statewide directory of memorials—veterans' or otherwise. I then attempted to find California's veterans' memorials in a national directory. None existed. I decided that there should be a comprehensive and complete list of the permanent tributes throughout this country that have been dedicated to the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice and paid the ultimate price for their country.

Since then, I have worked to build a complete, comprehensive list of every tribute to armed conflict in the United States for more than six years. I have sent out over 30,000 surveys to veterans' organizations and municipal entities throughout the United States. I sent a survey to every state, county, city, village, parish, hamlet—anyone who may have a record of where a tribute was—in this country. The responses I received range from detailed descriptions of tributes, including the names and histories of those honored, to "Yes" or "No." To date, I have received more than 10,000 responses, and I have identified, even if only preliminarily, more than 8,600 permanent tributes honoring military conflicts and those who have served our nation in 50 states.

During this time, I founded Remembering Veterans Who Earned Their Stripes (RVETS), a nonprofit 501(c) organization dedicated to creating a national directory of veterans' memorials in America and monitoring the condition of the tributes annually. To the best of my knowledge, this directory is the only one of its kind in the United States.

Over the years, I have approached and worked with many other veterans and community organizations on this project. I have included with my testimony examples of support I have received from organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Minority Officers Association, Inc., and the San Gabriel Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America. While RVETS has maintained the lead role in identifying, researching, cataloging, and monitoring the nation's tributes to our Armed Services, we recognize the important role that Federal assistance would play.

Since 1995, RVETS has been at the forefront of this effort. We believe that locating, cataloging, and monitoring permanent tributes— and telling the stories of American heroes—will provide enormous benefits not only to the millions of veterans throughout the country, but to our young people who can learn about our rich heritage, to the senior citizens who remember the sacrifices that they and their neighbors made during WWII and the Korean War. And to my generation, the Viet-

nam Veteran, who served proudly and with distinction along with the veterans of other conflicts.

*Federal Assistance Would Be a Great Benefit*

To address the risk of losing more tributes, former Congressman Jim Rogan introduced House Concurrent Resolution 345 on June 6, 2000. The resolution expressed the sense of the Congress regarding the need for cataloging and maintaining public memorials commemorating military conflicts of the United States and the service of individuals in the Armed Forces. In addition to Congressman Rogan, 27 Members of Congress cosponsored the resolution (see attached list). Among those cosponsors were Chairman Elton Gallegly, Chairman Ken Calvert, Chairman Richard Pombo, and Chairman George Radanovich, all current members of the House Committee on Resources.

On July 26, 2000, the Committee on Resources met to consider the bill. No amendments were offered, and the bill was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

On September 19, 2000, the House of Representatives passed the resolution by voice vote on the Suspension Calendar. During its consideration, now-Chairman of the Committee on Resources Jim Hansen stated, "Thousands of public memorials dealing with the United States' involvement in military conflicts exist throughout the world. However, there is no index or record as to their location nor is there a cataloged assessment as to their condition. Unfortunately, many of these memorials suffer from neglect, disrepair or have been relocated or stored in facilities where they are not accessible to the public." He concluded his remarks by urging other Members of the House of Representatives to support the resolution.

Rather than independent consideration by the Senate, the Resolution was included in Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's S. 964, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Equitable Compensation Act. S. 964 became Public Law 106-511 (excerpt attached).

Under current law, many branches of the Federal government catalog, monitor, and maintain federally funded memorials to the service of our Armed Forces. For example, the Department of the Interior is responsible for cataloging, monitoring, and maintaining federally funded memorials. The Department does not keep track of non-federally funded tributes. However, the same resources currently deployed to catalog Federal memorials could be used to catalog non-federal tributes. Additionally, the Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for cataloging, monitoring, and maintaining memorials within the National Cemetery Administration and throughout the DVA. It does not keep track of non-federally funded tributes.

H.R. 2748, if enacted into law, would coordinate these disparate efforts in one program and collect all of the information in one location so it is easy for the public to access. The responsible Federal agency would work with community groups and other Federal agencies to collect data on the nation's tributes to service in the Armed Forces. The data would be collected, verified, and made available on the Internet so veterans, students, and anyone else interested could access it at their convenience.

The Congressional Budget Office, in scoring House Concurrent Resolution 345, estimated the cost of the program to be \$1 million per year. This funding would be used to establish the database and Web site and pay the researchers collecting and verifying the data.

H.R. 2748, if enacted into law, would bridge the divide between what the Federal government currently does and community groups, like RVETS, have been doing. It would create a public-private partnership and establish a central point around which those Americans interested in preserving our memorials could rally. I envision the Department of the Interior working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Library of Congress, the American Battle Monuments Commission, and any other Federal agency that had information and was willing to help. Veterans' organizations like mine would work in concert with the Federal government and would help to create the database. And in the end, the product is something that we all can be proud of.

*Benefits of H.R. 2748 The benefits of H.R. 2748 to the nation are many and far-reaching. It will:*

- Honor the Armed Forces: By creating a comprehensive catalog of tributes to patriotism, H.R. 2748 will demonstrate to America's Armed Forces and veterans that their sacrifices are appreciated and remembered.
- Help to Educate America's Children: High school students are now studying U.S. history without the benefit of first-hand accounts from veterans. H.R. 2748 will provide students throughout the U.S. and around the world with access to

the stories behind the tributes. RVETS has already received inquiries from colleges and universities including the University of Pisa, Italy. An Italian student was doing his Masters dissertation on United States wars and was provided data on specific battle monuments.

- Promote Patriotism: H.R. 2748 will increase awareness in our youth to the sacrifices that have been made for the liberties that we all enjoy. This will be accomplished in a proactive manner by distributing to every school district a copy of the stories of their local hometown heroes of war. This information can be used in history and government classes. RVETS has already begun to perform this service, and it has worked successfully in concert with the "Veterans in the Classroom" program.
- Aid in Chronicling Our History: H.R. 2748 will provide a framework that will promote cooperation between public and private efforts. RVETS has established a working relationship with the Library of Congress to share information. The LOC is currently conducting a program of video interviews with World War I veterans to create a video history of World War I. We feel a sense of urgency because our veterans of war are now dying at a rate of more than one thousand a day. Their stories of courage, commitment, and of patriotism are dying with them.
- Facilitate Genealogical Research: H.R. 2748 will help families to teach their younger members about their unique history. RVETS intends to record every name on every memorial in America and include that information in the database. That number will be enormous, but the benefits will be equally significant. People will be able to input their family surname or ancestor and immediately find the locations of every tribute in America that bears that name. Much like the family who made the pilgrimage to Hawaii, the database can also satisfy families' needs for resolution and closure for their lost loved ones.
- Benefit Preservation Efforts: H.R. 2748 intentionally does not authorize the Federal government to maintain America's memorials. However, it will provide veterans' organizations and other community groups with the tool they need to keep track of memorials so they can maintain them at their own expense.

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Mr. RADANOVICH. I have got a couple of questions regarding this. It seems that the desire to want to create the data base and honor America's veterans is something that everybody wants to do. The question is who would have the responsibility and who would be best suited to make sure that the data base is complete and available to everybody.

Do you have an idea in your mind about how this would work? Would it be with the Veterans' Affairs Department? Would it be with the Department of the Interior? I kind of envision it much like the Office of Historic Places that registers historic places across the country, that catalogs and maintains a data base to identify those areas. Is it kind of similar to what you are thinking about?

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to work with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, or any other Federal agency. I think what is obviously needed, as evidenced by the earlier testimony, there is a great deal of confusion. One reason why we lose memorials and the memories of those people behind the memorials is because no one knows where they are at. There is no accessibility to them.

I can give you example after example of memorials that I receive a letter from a person, or an e-mail, and they said there is a memorial up the street here and it is falling apart. I make a very simple call to the local veterans' organization in their city and in every case, that is addressed. I suggest that their memorial is about to be placed on a national website with a picture and they are happy to make sure that their memorial is in pristine condition, which is part of our goal.

Mr. RADANOVICH. It seems that while we are considering what might be the best place to assign the responsibility of collecting and maintaining a data base, most of the departments, I think, or agencies that are willing to do it are willing to do it as long as they have the funding in order to do it. So often, we give in situations like these the responsibilities without the funding.

Do you have an idea of the cost of, I think, perfecting the data base, you know, getting everything down and then maintaining it? Is there any idea of the cost in your own mind?

Mr. ROONEY. Our early estimates were over an 18-month period that we could establish the data base, the infrastructure, and deliver 1,000 memorials. I want to remind the Committee that we are not talking about the address and a photograph, but most especially the stories of the heroes behind those memorials. We need to send verifiers and researchers out into the field. And after the initial 1,000 is established, then I think it was the Congressional Budget Committee that suggested a \$1 million a year ongoing cost until the data base is complete, and after that, it is just a matter of maintaining the site.

Mr. RADANOVICH. So \$100 million a year until the establishment of it.

Mr. ROONEY. One million.

Mr. RADANOVICH. One million, OK. I am glad I heard that correctly this time.

[Laughter.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. And then much less to maintain it after it is established?

Mr. ROONEY. Yes, sir.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Very good. My question regarding the schools' funding in Yosemite and Bass Lake, well, actually, Wawona inside Yosemite National Park, to Mr. Stauffer and Mr. Kelly, both of you representing different school districts, how are the kids that are educated inside Yosemite at both of those schools at a disadvantage to other children that are educated in, say, down in Mariposa, closer to the district where they have larger schools, or the same in Madera County? How are the kids in Yosemite at a disadvantage as compared to other children in the school districts?

Mr. KELLY. I can speak on behalf of Mariposa County. In El Portal and in Yosemite Valley School, we certainly have some advantages that others do not. I mean, these kids live right in the middle of Yosemite Valley. I mean, what an opportunity to live and go to school in that kind of a resource.

But what is available down in the main district office are science programs. There is band. We are getting band now again because the road is open. They repaired the road, and we get band for the whole school for 2 hours a week right now, which we are thrilled to have, but we did not have that over the last 3 years.

We have kids with special needs, as well, so if we have therapists that need to come up, they come up, again, for 1 day. They will come up for a couple hours a week. Again, they use a good part of their teaching time driving to and from the school. If the weather is bad, they do not come. If the road is closed, they do not come. So it is about building those equities back up.

Mr. STAUFFER. It is very much the same for Wawona School. For an example, the special ed students at Wawona School, right now, there is only one. They get service 1 day a week, where the other schools in the Oakhurst area get service every day. Michelle, Mrs. Horner, relies greatly on volunteers, but they are not always there to help.

So it is the service issue. We have no extra programs for reading remediation, science, foreign language, those kinds of things that are available at our other sites, and it is that travel distance problem, as well. When you are servicing a special needs student, if you have one, I mean, it is extremely expensive to send somebody up from the district office and drive back again. It is the drive time problem.

Mr. RADANOVICH. One of the things that always upset me when I was growing up is that though your schools did get to break on Wednesday afternoon and go skiing in Badger—

Mr. KELLY. We still do that.

Mr. RADANOVICH. —it upsets me very much that I never had that opportunity.

[Laughter.]

Mr. RADANOVICH. But nothing compared to special education needs and the arts, especially.

What kind of alternative funding sources do you have at your disposal? I mean, there are not a lot of alternatives out there, but if you have them, if you could explain them to me, I would like to know what they are.

Mr. KELLY. Well, for example, on the Yosemite Valley School, the concessionaire is very participatory in the education in El Portal and in the Valley. We donate cash to both organizations, the parent-teacher groups. We also do provide that transportation to Badger Pass for that Wednesday afternoon ski, but we also give them a certain allotted time, also, for use of our buses on other school transportation issues. So it, in total, sums to about \$25,000 that the company gives to the two schools.

In addition, our parent-teacher group in the school, we raise about \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year, also, with fundraisers, bake sales. We do all sorts of things. And with that money, we just hired a local artist who is teaching an art program in the school. Again, those extra activities that we are not afforded by living in a park, we raise money to provide those activities.

Mr. STAUFFER. And again, it is basically the same at Wawona. Our teaching principal does fundraisers. They have bake sales. They have auctions. They have all sorts of participation from the communities. And, as well, the concessionaire, I believe, helps with the transportation for the ski program. Other than that, it is very difficult to find outside funding sources to supplement the—

Mr. RADANOVICH. To pick up any difference?

Mr. STAUFFER. Right. And again, we are running at a \$100,000 deficit.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mrs. Christensen?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Kelly and Mr. Stauffer, from your testimony, I have a better appreciation of the difficulties that you have. Although there is some question on where funding should come from and so forth, it is clear that the schools do need some assist-

ance and, of course, the children should be entitled to the best education that can be provided for them. I do not have a question for you particularly.

I did have some questions for Mr. Rooney, just so that I understand. You catalogued more than 8,600 tributes. There are more? It is anticipated that there would be more that still need to be cataloged?

Mr. ROONEY. Oh, by all means.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I am sorry?

Mr. ROONEY. There are probably many more memorials out there.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And you are asking not just that they be catalogued, but that the story be—to me, that was not clear in the bill, but that the story behind each person, each battle, whatever the memorial is also needs to be researched?

Mr. ROONEY. I teach high school science in the Los Angeles Unified School District and so I see the role models that our children select and Henry Johnson has not been selected even once as a role model. There are virtually tens of thousands of stories of commitment and bravery and courage and standing against insurmountable odds. Those are the stories that I propose to tell.

A large part of what we intend to do is we intend to make available every story to every school district in America so those teachers of history and government will have, as a teaching aid, they will have the story of the local hometown hero of liberty. We think that will be a great benefit to the kids to encourage them to have a greater sense of history, a greater sense of patriotism, to know.

Like we just lost up in Frasier Park, which is near my home, we just lost one of our boys in Afghanistan. The kids in that high school are doing several tributes. That high school, those kids are inspired today because of the sacrifice that that young man made. We would suggest that virtually every school in America has such a story. We want to tell those stories to those children.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And you do not have a particular preference as to who does it? You do not see this as a Veterans' Administration responsibility? It could be either, as far as you are concerned?

Mr. ROONEY. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. The National Park Service currently has just 28 veterans' memorials of their many, many memorials that they have oversight over. It seemed to us like a logical extension of their current data base.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. We will try to iron it out, because it is a worthwhile project and something that we want to support, so I am willing to work with the Chair and you and the Park Service and the Veterans' Administration to figure out who is going to get it done. There is funding provided for it, Mr. Chairman, so I look forward to working with you on it.

Mr. RADANOVICH. I cannot imagine any, whether you go to the Department of Interior or Veterans' Affairs, would not mind having it as long as they had the money, and I think that is what we need to make sure happens.

Thank you very much. I do not think that we have any other questions today of our panel. I want to thank you all very much for taking the effort to come out here to testify.

With that ends this hearing. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:12 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]  
 [A letter submitted for the record follows:]

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - NATIONAL CEMETERY  
 ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON DC 20420

The Honorable George Radanovich, Chairman  
 Subcommittee on National Parks,  
 Recreation and Public Lands  
 Washington, DC 20515-6207

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your Subcommittee regarding H.R. 2748, the "National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act." As I stated in my testimony, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) believes this legislation, as currently drafted, would expand VA's mission beyond our primary mission-to meet the medical, benefits, and burial needs of our Nation's veterans. We also believe that the creation, oversight, and management of a database of all American war memorials would exceed the current capabilities of VA. We would also like to point out that the bill sponsor, Representative David Dreier, testified that the authority and responsibility for the database should not be given to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

During the hearing, you asked how many memorials fall under VA's jurisdiction and whether or not information on these memorials is accessible to the public through VA's Internet website. In summer 2001, the National Cemetery Administration embarked on a project to compile a comprehensive list of war memorials that are located on VA property. The primary purpose of VA's inventory is for maintenance and property management, not public education. We estimate that VA manages approximately 800 memorials and monuments, the majority of which are located at VA national cemeteries. Currently, however, VA has documented basic information on only 177 of these memorials. This information is accessible to the public through VA's website at [www.va.gov/facmgt/historic/](http://www.va.gov/facmgt/historic/) (select "Inventory of VA's Historic Properties" then "Monuments and Memorials").

VA is unable to provide an accurate estimate of the total number of war memorials that exist beyond our jurisdiction because the number of war memorials is so vast. Permanent veteran and war-related memorials are found in countless locations across the national landscape. They are located in urban parks and small-town centers, private and public cemeteries, courthouse lawns and school grounds, adjacent to roads and highways, on post office walls, at veterans' institutions, armories, and many more settings.

As I stated in my testimony, VA has identified several entities that have developed databases that capture information on war memorials. Because these databases were developed independently, it is not known how much of their content overlaps. Each inventory was apparently developed using different methodologies and criteria, and was created for different purposes.

If you or other Subcommittee members have any additional questions, please have a member of your staff contact Mr. Christopher Allen at (202) 273-9423. Thank you, again, for allowing me the opportunity to express VA's position on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Vincent L. Barile  
 Deputy Under Secretary for Management

cc: The Honorable Donna M. Christiansen, Ranking Member

