

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
CONCERNING S. 2264, TO DESIGNATE MEMORIALS TO THE SERVICE OF
MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES IN WORLD WAR I, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

July 23, 2014

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 2264, a bill to designate memorials to the service of members of the United States Armed Forces in World War I, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 2264 with two amendments.

S. 2264 would redesignate Pershing Park in the District of Columbia as the National World War I Memorial and allow for the enhancement of the park through the construction of appropriate sculptural and other commemorative elements, including landscaping, to further honor the service of members of the United States Armed Forces in World War I. The bill also designates the Liberty Memorial of Kansas City at America's National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, as the National World War I Museum and Memorial. Finally, the bill makes amendments to the World War I Centennial Commission Act.

The Department has testified previously on other bills which sought to designate a National World War I Memorial in either the District of Columbia or at the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri. In the 111th Congress, S. 760 and H.R. 1849 proposed designating the Liberty Memorial as the National World War I Memorial, while S. 2097 would have rededicated the District of Columbia War Memorial as a National and District of Columbia World War I Memorial. In the 112th Congress, H.R. 938 proposed to designate the Liberty Memorial as the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and the District of Columbia War Memorial as the District of Columbia and National World War I Memorial. In each case, the Department testified that it was premature to establish a National World War I Memorial without studying existing sites that may already serve that role. The Department also testified that a national memorial to World War I already exists in the District of Columbia.

General John J. Pershing Park, located in the area along Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets NW, was built by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation and is now under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. The park includes a statue of General Pershing and artwork detailing the major battles in World War I that involved U.S. troops. Quotations on the existing World War I Veterans Memorial at Pershing Park include General Pershing's tribute to the officers and men of the American Expeditionary Forces of World War I and a commemoration of those who served in the United States Navy in World War I. The Department believes that this is the appropriate site to commemorate World War I.

The National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) has concluded that the existing World War I Memorial at Pershing Park serves today as a national memorial to the veterans who served in World War I. On July 23, 2013, NCMAC considered H.R. 222, which would have established a new and separate memorial to the veterans of World War I within the District of Columbia. The Commission unanimously recommended enhancing the existing World War I Memorial in Pershing Park rather than establishing a second memorial. More recently, on May 6, 2014, NCMAC considered S. 2264 and its companion bill, H.R. 4489. The intent of the bill to enhance the existing commemoration at Pershing Park was met with unanimous approval.

S. 2264 directs that there will be no infringement upon the existing District of Columbia War Memorial, and provides for compliance with the Commemorative Works Act (CWA), with two exceptions. The bill waives section 8905 with regard to site selection, as Pershing Park is an existing memorial site and the bill only calls for its re-designation. The bill, also, waives section 8908(b) of the CWA, as the Area I designation process is precluded by re-designation of Pershing Park. The Department agrees with these waivers. It further prohibits Federal funds from being used for the design, establishment, or enhancement of a memorial or commemorative work by the WWI Centennial Commission.

Because of the importance of World War I to the history of the United States and consistent with the treatment of memorials to other significant wars fought by our country, the Department believes that this bill would designate the National World War I Memorial as a new unit of the National Park Service, which would in turn be managed by the National Mall and Memorial Parks. We recommend that language be included in the text of the legislation establishing the memorial as a separate unit of the National Park System.

The Department also recommends striking “national” from the name of the title of the memorial to redesignate Pershing Park in the District of Columbia as the World War I Memorial. No other memorials to our country’s wars sited in the District of Columbia have “national” in their title, including the World War II Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. H.R. 4489, as reported by the House Natural Resources Committee, includes this recommendation. We believe siting the World War I Memorial in our nation’s capital will allow the memorial to stand on its own and provide appropriate recognition to honor the service and sacrifice of all those who fought in this war.

The proposed amendments are attached. In addition, the Department of Justice advises that it has constitutional concerns with S. 2264, which it intends to convey to the Committee by separate transmission.

This concludes my testimony on S. 2264, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Proposed amendment to S. 2264

On page 2, strike lines 17-19 and insert:

“(a) REDESIGNATION.—Pershing Park in the District of Columbia is hereby redesignated as the ‘World War I Memorial’, a separate unit of the National Park System.”