

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. CALDWELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING S. 4218, TO DESIGNATE THE VISITOR CENTER FOR THE FIRST STATE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK TO BE LOCATED AT THE SHERIFF'S HOUSE IN NEW CASTLE, DELAWARE, AS THE "THOMAS R. CARPER VISITOR CENTER".**

May 15, 2024

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Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 4218, to designate the visitor center for the First State National Historical Park to be located at the Sheriff's House in New Castle, Delaware, as the "Thomas R. Carper Visitor Center".

The Sheriff's House Welcome Center of First State National Historical Park in New Castle, Delaware was formally dedicated on April 27, 2024 after an extensive multimillion dollar rehabilitation effort. The Sheriff's House was constructed in 1857 on the site of the circa 1793 jail, which is all that remains of Delaware's first prison system. The Sheriff's House, the only NPS-owned facility in New Castle, was donated by the State of Delaware in 2013 in connection with the establishment of the First State National Monument by Presidential Proclamation 8944.

Senator Thomas R. Carper has served the state of Delaware in the U.S. Senate since 2001. Senator Carper was instrumental in seeking the creation of First State National Monument in March 2013. In December 2014, Congress passed the legislation he sponsored to redesignate the monument as First State National Historical Park and expand it to include four additional sites: Fort Christina, Old Swedes Church, John Dickinson Plantation, and the Ryves Holt House. Senator Carper continues to be a champion of First State National Historical Park and has diligently worked to support the park's development.

S. 4218 would designate the visitor center for the First State National Historical Park to be located in the Sheriff's House in New Castle, Delaware, or any successor to that visitor center that is constructed after the date of enactment of the Act and serves as the primary visitor center for the park as the "Thomas R. Carper Visitor Center". The NPS generally discourages the naming of park features except when there is a compelling justification and at least five years have elapsed since the death of the person. However, we recognize that Congress may also specifically authorize the placement of such recognition. In this instance, the Department defers to Congress and does not object to S. 4218.

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