

**Subcommittee on Federal Lands**  
Tom McClintock, Chairman  
Hearing Memorandum

May 20, 2016

**To:** All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

**From:** Majority Committee Staff – Aniela Butler  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x 6-7736)

**Hearing:** Legislative hearing on H.R. 4789 (Rep. Don Beyer), To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a structure for visitor services on the Arlington Ridge tract, in the area of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, and for other purposes.  
**May 24, 2016 at 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth HOB.**

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**Bill Summary**

H.R. 4789, introduced by Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA-08), is a bipartisan bill that authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to establish a structure for visitor services, including permanent restroom facilities, near the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia.

**Cosponsor:**

Rep. Cook, Paul [R-CA-8]

**Invited Witnesses**

**Panel I**

*The Honorable Don Beyer (D-VA-08)*

**Panel II**

*Mr. Bill Shaddox*

Acting Associate Director for Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands  
National Park Service  
Washington, D.C.

**Background**

The U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial (Memorial) located in Arlington, Virginia, honors “United States Marine Corps who have given their lives to their country since November 10, 1775.”<sup>1</sup> Based on the iconic image by Joe Rosenthal, the Memorial depicts five U.S Marines and

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, “History of the Marine Corps War Memorial,”  
<https://www.nps.gov/GWMP/learn/historyculture/usmcwarmemorial.htm>

a U.S. Navy corpsman raising the American flag on Iwo Jima during World War II.<sup>2</sup> The Memorial attracts over one million visitors annually and hosts several popular events including Summer Sunset Parades and the Marine Corps Marathon.<sup>3</sup> Despite this popularity, the Memorial lacks basic visitor services such as permanent restroom facilities. Due to the high visitation numbers at the Memorial, the National Park Service (NPS) identified a clear need to replace the existing temporary portable bathroom facilities in favor of a more respectful and permanent solution.

H.R. 4789 authorizes the construction of a visitor services center that includes permanent restroom facilities and a small area for interpretative signage and materials near the Memorial. When Congress authorized the United States Air Force Memorial in 2001, the legislation prohibited the creation of additional structures on the 25.32 acre parcel of land surrounding the Memorial.<sup>4</sup> Congress did not intend for the prohibition to restrict a facility for public restrooms but rather wanted to keep the area surrounding the Memorial open and potentially available for future use by Arlington National Cemetery. Given the prohibition on construction, this legislation is necessary for NPS to move forward with the creation of a new visitor services facility. NPS intends to construct a non-staffed facility, designed to ensure a minimal impact on the open space around the Memorial, funded by a recent \$5.37 million donation to the Memorial from billionaire philanthropist David Rubenstein.

**Administration Position:**

The Administration position is unknown at this time.

**Cost:**

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

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<sup>2</sup> National Park Service, "US Marine Corps War Memorial," [https://www.nps.gov/GWMP/planyourvisit/usmc\\_memorial.htm](https://www.nps.gov/GWMP/planyourvisit/usmc_memorial.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Pub. L. 107-107. 115 Stat. 1332. 28 Dec. 2001.