

As Representative of the 23rd Congressional District of Texas, I have the distinct honor of advocating for eight incredible national parks.

Our National Parks are an integral part of the American experience, and I've seen firsthand how the eight parks in my district, including Big Bend and the San Antonio missions, provide immeasurable cultural, environmental and economic benefits.

Each park's landscape has a unique story that allows us to understand our past, appreciate our present, and ensure they are available in the future. For these parks to remain beautiful and accessible, we have a responsibility as a nation to care for and maintain them.

The National Park Service (NPS) was created just over 100 years ago to do just that.

But unfortunately, NPS currently faces a nationwide backlog of more than \$11 billion to repair roads, visitor facilities, trails, and other park structures. \$147 million of that backlogged maintenance is in Texas alone.

I've seen how much of an impact this has on the maintenance of our parks which is why I introduced the *National Park Service Legacy Act of 2017* with my colleagues, including the distinguished Ranking Member from Hawaii, Rep. Hanabusa.

The bipartisan, bicameral bill would address the present backlog by distributing currently unassigned federal mineral revenues back into a restoration fund. The funds can be used for overdue repairs so that our

parks can remain beautiful and accessible for future generations of park-goers to enjoy.

My bill demonstrates that the call for Congress to fix our aging parks is being heard, and has been endorsed by park champions like the National Parks Conservation Association, Pew Charitable Trusts, (Whom I'd like to thank for being here today) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

But our bill isn't the only solution to this expanding and pervasive problem.

My colleague and friend from the great state of Idaho has worked tirelessly on his bill, which, if enacted, would accomplish the same goals as my own.

I am tremendously supportive of the Chairman's efforts, **strongly** encourage my colleagues to support both my bill, and Chairman Simpson's bill and yield back the balance of my time.