



NATIONAL EMS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

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Subcommittee on Federal Lands.
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HR 1037 National Emergency Medical Services Commemorative Work Act

Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Hanabusa and members of the subcommittee,

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to share the views of the National EMS Memorial Foundation and the EMS community regarding HR 1037.

My name is Katie Orsino and I am honored to serve as the Executive Director of the National EMS Memorial Foundation.

On behalf of the Foundation and the EMS community, I am here today to testify in support of HR 1037 the "National Emergency Medical Services Commemorative Work Act; To authorize the National EMS Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs and for other purposes" Consistent with the Commemorative Works Act, the National EMS Memorial would be established without any cost to the Federal government.

It is important to note that National Capital Memorial Advisory Council has already given its approval for this project as required by the CWA. The National EMS Memorial would recognize the commitment, service and sacrifice of both volunteer and paid providers, across all of the various service delivery models including federal, tribal, state, local and private EMS providers.

When I started as the Executive Director of the Foundation I was the wife of an EMT and the sister of two EMT's.

Today I am still the wife of an EMT but 3 years ago we lost my 27 year old brother Matthew after he sustained an injury in the line of duty and died the next day. Last year my 30 year old sister was permanently disabled from an injury she sustained at work as an EMT, which ended her career. Every day I wait anxiously for my husband to come home at midnight. This is my personal story as a member of an EMS family but this is not a unique set of circumstances for providers, their families and loved ones. All members of the EMS family fully understand that EMS providers serve in a dangerous profession that requires a great deal of commitment, not only from those in uniform but also from those who wait for them.

It is estimated that a rate of 13 fatalities per 100,000 EMS workers annually, which compares with 14 for police, and 16 for firefighters. In the last year there were 14 EMS line of duty deaths reported. It is also important to note that not all line-of-duty EMS deaths are reported as such due to lack of centralized tracking, or definition. Also, on an annual basis 25% of all EMS providers are injured on the job and All EMS providers are virtually ensured to be injured at some point during their career.

President Reagan once said: “The American people are asking: Does history still have a place for America, for her people, for her great ideals? “We believe that this nation does have a place and a need for the American ideals of Commitment, Service and Sacrifice.

This project is not just about the ultimate sacrifice that my brother and hundreds of others have already made. It's about the Commitment, Service and Sacrifice that they, those that served before them and those that will serve after them commit to and choose to make for this nation knowing that some of them will die, and virtually all will be injured for this choice. But they continue to serve because these are the ideals of Emergency Medical Services Providers. These ideals are a part of our history and heritage, they are the heart and soul of this country. These ideals represent the best of the true American spirit.

Today there are over 850,000 EMS providers who continue to honor the ideals of Commitment, Service and Sacrifice. In response to more than 40 million calls for service each year, EMS providers commit to you, to me and to every single person across the nation residents and visitors alike despite the dangers they may face and without regard to their personal safety. In the farthest reaches of our Nation, the citizens rely on these ideals for every moment and will continue to do so into the future.

Today you are presented with a choice, the choice to be the ones who recognize the Commitment, Service, and Sacrifices of the EMS community and to honor these American ideals through favorable consideration of HR 1037.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak here today and to all for your continued leadership and for your thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Katie

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