

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Markup Memorandum

September 21, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp and Rebekah Rodriguez
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x67736)

Markup: **H.R. 6108 (Rep. Jody B. Hice)** To provide for partnerships among State and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance the visitor experience at nationally significant battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War, and for other purposes.
September 27, 2018, 10:15 am; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 6108, “Preserving America’s Battlefields Act”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 6108, introduced by Representative Jody B. Hice (R-GA-10), increases the authorization of appropriations for the Battlefield Acquisition Grant Program from \$10 million to \$20 million each fiscal year through 2028 and authorizes funding for interpretation and restoration of preserved battlefields.

Background

The American Battlefield Protection Program was created by the Secretary of the Interior in 1991 to promote the preservation of significant historic American battlefields, and was officially authorized by Congress in 1996.¹ The Program focuses on land use, cultural resources and site management planning, and public education, by providing professional consultation to individuals, groups, and governments interested in preserving historic battlefields.² In addition to professional assistance, the Program awards grants to non-profits, local governments, and States looking to purchase battlefield land. These grants encourage private sector and State investment in battlefield preservation.

As part of the larger Program, the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program helps States and communities acquire and protect historic battlefields. Although originally only available to protect Civil War sites, in 2014 it was expanded to include battlefields from the American Revolution and War of 1812.³ Since 1998, grant funds have been used to purchase and preserve over 30,000 acres of battlefield, including lands at 75 Civil War battlefields in 16

¹ National Park Service. “About Us.” American Battlefield Protection Program.

<https://www.nps.gov/abpp/aboutus.htm>

² Ibid.

³ National Park Service. “Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program.”

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/battlefields/battlefield-land-acquisition-grant-program.htm>

different States.^{4 5} Among the battlefields that grant funds have been used to preserve are Antietam, Gettysburg, and Shiloh.⁶

Grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a dollar-for-dollar non-federal match. Funds for grants are derived from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.^{7 8} Currently, funding for the acquisition grant program is capped at \$10 million each fiscal year (FY), with appropriations authorized through FY 2021.

H.R. 6108 would reauthorize the grant program through FY 2028 and increase the authorization of appropriations to \$20 million each fiscal year.

The Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 6108 on September 6, 2018.

Major Provisions of H.R. 6108

- Increases the authorization of appropriations for the Battlefield Acquisition Grant Program from \$10 million to \$20 million for each FY through 2028.
- Limits funding for projects and programs to modernize battlefield interpretive and educational assets through the deployment of technology, disbursed through the competitive grant process to non-profit organizations, to \$1 million.
- Limits funding for grants to 501(c)(3) organizations for projects that restore day-of-battle conditions on land preserved through the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program funds to \$1 million.

Cost

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

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Anticipated Amendment

None.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

⁴ Letter from the American Battlefield Trust to Chairman Rob Bishop dated July 11, 2018.

⁵ National Park Service. "About Us." American Battlefield Protection Program.

<https://www.nps.gov/abpp/aboutus.htm>

⁶ American Battlefield Trust. "A Legacy Of Success" Support the Preserving America's Battlefields Act.

<https://www.battlefields.org/preserve/speak-out/support-preserving-americas-battlefields-act>

⁷ National Park Service. "Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants." American Battlefield Protection Program.

<https://www.nps.gov/abpp/grants/cwblaggrants.htm>

⁸ Public Law 88-587 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg897.pdf>