

# Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman  
Mark-Up Memorandum

March 17, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Steven Parr  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: **H.R. 3997 (Rep. Keith J. Rothfus)**, To waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans’ demonstrations and special events at war memorials on Federal land, and for other purposes.  
**March 21, 2018, at 10:15 a.m.; 1324 Longworth House Office Building**

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## **H.R. 3997, “Free Veterans from Fees Act”**

### **Summary of the Bill**

H.R. 3997, introduced by Representative Keith J. Rothfus (R-PA-12), waives the application fee for any special-use permit for a veterans’ demonstrations or special events at war memorials on federal land.

### **Cosponsors**

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard [D-HI-02], Rep. Mike Bishop [R-MI-08] and Rep. Claudia Tenney [R-NY-22]

### **Background**

Special use permits are required by the National Park Service (NPS) for activities that provide a benefit to an individual, group, or organization, and for activities that require the use of a designated park location for a specific purpose and length of time.<sup>1</sup> According to NPS, special use permits can be used for reoccurring events like sports activities, picnics, weddings and family celebrations.<sup>2</sup> Other types of special use permits are used for special events including entertainment, charity events, races, tournaments, educational activities and demonstrations.<sup>3</sup> The final type of special use permits are for construction, research and utilities that benefit the surrounding communities and often involve access, infrastructure or research.<sup>4</sup> Special use permits are only issued by NPS for activities which are appropriate to the purpose of which the park was established and activities that can be sustained without causing unacceptable impacts to the valuable resources of the parks.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service, Special Use Permits, <https://www.nps.gov/nace/planyourvisit/special-use-permits.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 2

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 2

All applications for special use permits, must be accompanied by a payment for initial processing, unless determined to be a first Amendment activity. There is not a consistent amount for the application fee. Currently, the National Mall charges \$120 for public gatherings and special events applications and \$90 for special use applications. <sup>6</sup> These fees submitted with the completed application also do not preclude the recovery of other costs associated with issuance of the permit.

In recognition of the significant sacrifices veterans have made for our country, H.R. 3997 would waive the application fee associated with special use permits for any veteran demonstration or special event at war memorials on federal land.

### **Cost**

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

### **Administration Position**

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

### **Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)**

None.

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<sup>6</sup> National Park Service, Permits & Reservations  
<https://www.nps.gov/nama/planyourvisit/permitsandreservations.htm>.