

JACK REED
RHODE ISLAND

COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS

ARMED SERVICES, RANKING MEMBER

BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

INTELLIGENCE, Ex OFFICIO

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3903

Washington, DC:

728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3903
(202) 224-4642

Rhode Island:

1000 Chapel View Boulevard, Suite 290
Cranston, RI 02920-3074
(401) 943-3100

One Exchange Terrace, Room 408
Providence, RI 02903-1744
(401) 528-5200

1 (800) 284-4200

TDD Relay Rhode Island
1 (800) 745-5555

<https://reed.senate.gov>

June 11, 2026

Ms. Jessica Bowron, Comptroller
Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Bowron:

I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed construction of the 250-foot “Triumphal Arch” in Memorial Circle, within the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Washington, D.C. Construction of the proposed Arch without congressional approval would be a violation of federal law, a waste of taxpayer money, and an insult to memory of the men and women of the U.S. military whose final resting place is Arlington National Cemetery.

This project is driven not by popular demand or congressional action, but by President Trump’s apparent fetish for replicating European landmarks during his term. Indeed, the Arch has not received congressional approval as required under law. Passed in 1986, the Commemorative Works Act (CWA) requires congressional authorization for the construction of new “commemorative works” in areas administered by the National Park Service “in the District of Columbia and its environs.” Under the CWA, a “commemorative work” is “any statue, monument, sculpture, memorial, plaque, inscription, or other structure or landscape feature, including a garden or memorial grove, designed to perpetuate in a permanent manner the memory of an individual, group, event or other significant element of American history...” To date, Congress has not approved construction of the proposed arch.

At a time when our brave troops are at war, the idea of tampering with the area immediately abutting Arlington National Cemetery is an affront to those interred there, their families, and every service member. At over twice the height of the Lincoln Memorial, the Arch will disrupt the historic view of the hallowed ground at Arlington National Cemetery, obscuring headstones of American veterans and war dead. As the National Trust for Historic Preservation has noted, the proposed location of the Arch “is inconsistent with the solemn historic character of Arlington National Cemetery,” the resting place for over 400,000 veterans and their families. It is their service and sacrifice that should remain the focal point of this memorial landscape.

The Arch also would block the symbolic vista between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. Indeed, the National Park Service’s June 2026 assessment of the Arch found: “The proposed undertaking may result in a direct adverse effect to the Lincoln Memorial as it would change the interrelationships of the existing monumental landscape, which forms an intentional balance between natural and built features, axial and picturesque landscape elements.”

Lastly, Congress has not provided any funds for this project. Instead, the Trump Administration has indicated that it plans to divert \$15 million from the National Endowment from the Humanities (NEH) to build the Arch. That will deprive millions of dollars for initiatives that would support museums, historic sites, colleges, K-12 classrooms, and more. This usurped \$15 million will not cover the needs of the entire project, and the Administration will likely continue to siphon funding from important programs for this project.

For the above reasons and those outlined by notable historians, architects, preservationists, aviation experts, and veterans, I urge you to reject the proposed “Triumphal Arch” and abandon the construction of this vanity project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jack" and last name "Reed" clearly legible.

Jack Reed
United States Senator