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United States Senate

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July 19, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

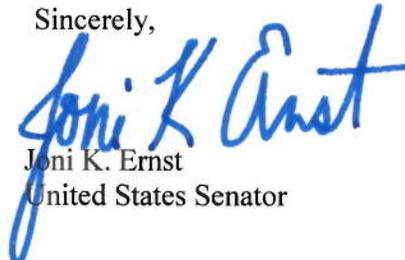
Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On April 25, 2017, I introduced S, 926, the Global War on Terrorism War Memorial Act along with Senator Manchin. This bill would authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia. In just a short while, this bill has garnered strong bipartisan support from twenty of our colleagues here in the Senate, many of whom are members of this committee. It's also worth noting that the companion bill has over 140 cosponsors in the House of Representatives.

This legislation sends a signal to those who have served and those who continue to serve in the Global War on Terror. As a veteran of the Global War on Terror, I saw firsthand these brave men and women defending our nation. I saw young men and women leaving their regular lives behind to ensure we at home were able to sleep safely at night. Now, many of those men and women are old enough to have their own children deployed in the name of this war. They, too, fight to defend us from an enemy that is ever present and threatens our security here at home.

What makes this commemorative work different from others that have come before this committee is the fact that the War on Terror is still ongoing. I am well aware that the Commemorative Works Act (CWA) requires that at least ten years elapse from the end of a war or conflict until such event can be commemorated. However, I'm also keenly aware that if we were to wait that long, a 40-year-old servicemember who deployed in 2001 would be approaching sixty-five years of age. The longer we wait, the greater the chance that our first veterans of the Global War on Terror will not be witnesses to a National Memorial dedicated to their service and sacrifice. It is my hope that the discussion today will revolve around why it is necessary and appropriate for a time-period exemption from the CWA be granted, so all those who have served in our nation's longest war, and their families, be given the opportunity to heal, honor, and remember.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator

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