A letter from the BLM State Director at the time indicates that the agency supported elimination of Udall Park’s reversionary interest in exchange for the Freeman Road property. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Congress never followed through on that promise.

This bill honors the Federal Government’s long forgotten commitment, which is why we support it and encourage its swift adoption. The unique circumstances of Udall Park justify transferring reversionary interest without further consideration or compensation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY).

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 1547, the Udall Park Land Exchange Completion Act.

Udall Park is a cherished urban park in the heart of Tucson. The city has invested millions of dollars in park facilities, including construction of very large community recreation and senior center swimming pools, a walking track, and multiple athletic fields and picnic areas.

In 2011, the mayor and city council approved a master plan update that calls for plans to invest even more money into the park by way of additional athletic fields and expanded recreational programming. However, unresolved disputes over this land have directly impeded the city from taking advantage of opportunities to supplement park funding, approve certain community events, or look to other commercial ventures like local farmers markets on small portions of the park that would benefit the city in general.

The Udall Park Land Exchange Completion Act resolves this historic land exchange agreement between the city of Tucson and the Bureau of Land Management at Udall Park.

In 1989, the city of Tucson and BLM entered into an agreement to exchange 297 acres of land adjacent to Saguaro National Park for 173 acres of BLM-owned land in northeast Tucson, now known as Udall Park. This agreement specifically outlined that the terms and conditions of this land conveyance would be determined by legislation to remove any and all encumbrances on Udall Park. Unfortunately, this legislation never came to fruition due to staff changes in multiple agencies in the city, and who knows what else, but as a result, the city has been prevented from utilizing Udall Park to its fullest extent. Recently, the issue came to a head over disputes on a small commercial lease located in Udall Park.

Federal red tape should not stand in the way of communities like mine developing local parks. It is common sense. Udall Park is a beautiful place in our southern Arizona community to gather, but this longstanding land dispute has prevented the city of Tucson from improving the park and growing it to its full potential for too long.

When I am out and about in my district and people come to me with challenges and issues like this, the first question I usually ask is: Does this literally take an act of Congress to fix? Let me say that again. Does this literally take an act of Congress to fix? In this case, the answer is yes.

I appreciate, as we testified before the House Natural Resources Federal Lands Subcommittee, the ranking member, Ms. Hanabusa, was saying, no kidding, in July: “If it takes an act of Congress to get this done . . . then that’s what we’ve got to do.”

I am with the ranking member at this point. It is time to finally take action and get this thing finished. My legislation would formally and finally complete a long overdue agreement on land that has already been exchanged at fair market value. The act directs conveyance of the Federal reversionary interest in Udall Park to the city, as the parties intended when the land exchange was made. This bill will allow Tucson to finally take full ownership of the park.

In closing, I want to thank Chairman Thompson, Chairman McClintock, and the members of the Natural Resources Committee, really, on both sides of the aisle, for working with me to move this legislation forward. This has got strong bipartisan support. I look forward to seeing this through and ensuring the land transfer is completed.

Mr. McEachin. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on this issue.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there an objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Thompson) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. McEachin) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Augustus Saint-Gaudens is one of the most prolific sculptors in our Nation’s history. His work includes Boston’s Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, Chicago’s Standing Lincoln, and New York’s William Tecumseh Sherman Memorial. Most notably, Saint-Gaudens designed a $20 double eagle gold piece for the U.S. Mint, considered one of the greatest American coins ever issued.

The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is a 190-acre historic site in Sullivan County, New Hampshire. The site encompasses the summer home and studio of this renowned American artist, backed by the annual presence in Sullivan County helped spawn the Cornish Artist Colony in nearby Cornish, New Hampshire. This colony, which was
In addition to preserving Saint-Gaudens' legacy, the site also protects a variety of important ecosystems. The site is bordered by two streams that feed into the Connecticut River, and it contains a large forest and pond where visitors can observe wildlife. The array of recreational activities, including hiking trails, trails that allow visitors to explore the grounds, a path to Paris and Rome, where he studied art and architecture and worked on his very first commission.

In 1876, Saint-Gaudens was tapped for his first of several prominent Civil War-related commissions, which include the Standing Lincoln statue of our 16th President. At over 12 feet tall, this historic landmark stands prominently in Chicago's Lincoln Park. After working on the statue for close to a decade, the towering sculpture was unveiled in 1887 to a crowd of over 10,000 people, including President Lincoln's only living grandson.

His most famous work was commissioned soon after: the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, a bronze bas-relief which took Saint-Gaudens 14 years to complete. Located in Boston Common, this iconic sculpture depicts Colonel Shaw and the 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, which was the first African-American regiment organized by the Union in the Civil War.

As one of the foremost American sculptors of the 19th century, Saint-Gaudens left a lasting legacy on our country’s artistic heritage, which continues to be cherished at our historic site in Cornish.

Since its authorization by Congress in 1964 and establishment a year later, the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site has blossomed into a popular tourist attraction and location for local artists and musicians to share their talents. However, the present name, which designates this location as a historic site, is no longer the most appropriate or useful to accurately portray the complexity of this site.

Whereas, National Historic Sites are typically designated for single buildings or sites that only encompass a few acres in size, the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is 190 acres in size and includes multiple buildings, a vast collection of American art, and a small trail network that allows visitors to explore the grounds.

My legislation would simply redesignate the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site to Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, which would more accurately illustrate all that the park has to offer.

In partnership with the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, a private nonprofit that operated the site until it donated the land to the National Park Service in 1965, this historic site offers rotating contemporary and historical exhibitions, concerts, hands-on workshops, lectures, and many other educational opportunities for our visitors.

The array of recreational activities offered to visitors makes this park much more than a historic site. It is a living remembrance to the great American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and the artistic legacy that he has left behind. It is my hope that this proposed name change will help attract more interest in the park, boost annual visitation, and help drive our local economy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to pass this legislation.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. Speaker, having no one else to speak on this issue, I yield back the balance of my time.