

The battlefields of the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War provide a unique opportunity for Americans to experience the epic battles that helped define our Nation. Preserving these American historic treasures is essential to remember the sacrifices that our ancestors made to secure our freedom and independence and preserve our Republic.

With the ongoing bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812 and the ongoing sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War, this is an opportune time to recommit ourselves to the protection of our Nation's hallowed grounds. Historical sites, once lost, are gone forever. We should act now to preserve these valuable sites.

The National Park Service has done an inventory of sites around the country, and they point to many that need this protection now.

I thank my colleague from Virginia for his enthusiastic support. I point out that there is strong bipartisan support for this legislation as cosponsors and other supporters. And I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As an original cosponsor of H.R. 1033, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. HOLT for his continued leadership to preserve and protect important historic battlefields throughout the United States, including those in his home State of New Jersey, which is better known as the "crossroads of the American Revolution."

As a Virginian, this legislation is also especially notable as it will continue to preserve important hallowed ground from our Nation's independence and the Civil War. The Civil War Battlefield Preservation program has been particularly beneficial to the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a result, hard-fought acres of battleground have been preserved in pivotal sites such as Appomattox, Cedar Creek, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Petersburg, and Richmond.

Preserving battlefields does more than just honor those who fought in those battles; it protects important places from development. I want to make sure that we continue those efforts in ensuring that we make the effort to keep these battlefields in their proper place in this Nation's history.

I also would like to emphasize that this program doesn't increase the amount of Federal land. I know there's been some criticism to say this is an effort to increase Federal land within this program. While it does increase and expand those battlefield areas that are eligible under the program, it doesn't increase the amount of Federal land in this particular project.

□ 1720

I want to make sure people understand that because this is really for the protection of battlefields outside of national park boundaries, giving those

concerned within those areas the ability to help preserve those lands. There is no additional management burden on the Federal Government, so these lands are not going to become part of a system in which we have to incur more costs to maintain those lands. It's the ability to make sure that we preserve those lands. Especially today, with the encroachment of development in these areas, these critical, historical sites must be preserved, and this gives the folks in those areas the flexibility and the tools—the ability—to preserve these lands.

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank my good friend from Virginia, and would reiterate what he has said.

In fact, the original legislation, which we are reauthorizing and extending through this bill, grew out of Virginia. It was because of the critical battlefields in Virginia that were at risk of being lost that this battlefield protection legislation was developed, but it will be beneficial across many States.

If you look where the War of 1812 was fought—in the Deep South and around the Great Lakes—and where the Revolutionary War was fought, which was up and down the Thirteen Colonies, this is something that is of great national importance; and because the authorization is about to expire, it is needed; and because so many of these battlefields are at great risk of being overrun by sprawl and development, it is at the greatest need now.

I urge my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As Mr. HOLT said, preserving battlefields is extraordinarily important, but it does more than just honor those who have fought in the past: it's important that it protects these places that are so important in our Nation's history.

Preserving these battlefields contributes economically to local businesses and to historic communities in these areas across the country. According to a recent study, in just five States, those States including Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, 15.8 million visitors went to these Civil War sites and spent nearly \$442 million in those local communities and supported 5,150 jobs. We talk all the time up here about jobs and the economy. This is something that we can do to improve and enhance jobs and the economy in these local communities.

We are blessed in Virginia, as Mr. HOLT said, with a rich history. According to the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Civil War site visitors stay longer and spend more than twice as much as the average visitor to the Commonwealth. Preserving battlefields is good for local communities and businesses, and it's good for jobs and the economy.

Mr. HOLT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WITTMAN. I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. HOLT. I would like to add to his economic numbers the fiscal fact that this does not appropriate any funds. We are just reauthorizing existing legislation and extending it.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, again, the bill continues a modest investment of Federal resources to protect these hallowed grounds where independence was won and our Republic secured.

I do want to reiterate what Mr. HOLT said in that this legislation does not increase authorized spending. Proponents of this program sought to double the annual spending authorization and add Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 sites to those eligible for grants, but the committee made sure that there was no increase in spending and insisted that the proposal be added to keep the authorization flat at these current levels when adding additional war sites. We wanted to make sure we had the opportunity for sites to be included, but in understanding where we are with the Nation's deficit, we wanted to make sure that we could preserve these sites without adding to the deficit. I think this is a very responsible way to do that, to make sure that communities have the ability to do the things they need to do, and also to make sure we keep in mind the times that we face here at the Federal level.

So I believe it's an extraordinarily good bill, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1033.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1033.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.