

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2018

Secretary Ryan Zinke
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

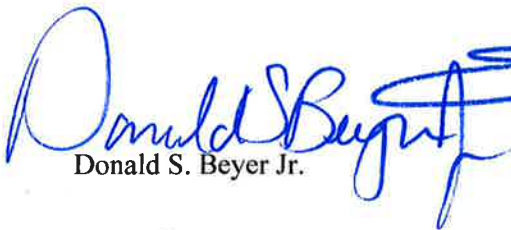
The National Parks Service has proposed to revise special regulations related to demonstrations and special events at locations within the National Mall and Memorial Parks and President's Park. The proposed changes would modify how the NPS processes permit applications for demonstrations and special events, locations where activities are allowed, not allowed, or allowed but subject to restrictions. Specifically, the proposal would close eighty percent of the White House sidewalk, put limits on spontaneous demonstration and structures, and start the conversation of charging fees for protests.

Given the historic importance of President's Park and the National Mall to the exercise of the First Amendment right of free speech and assembly, the American people deserve sufficient opportunity to understand and comment on changes that would impact their rights. Of particular concern is the possible introduction of a fee attached to holding demonstrations and the implication that could have to effectively price out many protests.

It is worth remembering the history of Park Service efforts to institute limits on protest. When it occurred during the Vietnam War, the Park Service was sued for attempting to curtail these freedoms. Thus, given this historic legacy and the historic importance of the Mall and President's Park as a unique site for the exercise of First Amendment rights, sufficient public comment is imperative. Due to the magnitude of the proposed changes, we write to request a 90-day extension for public comment.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



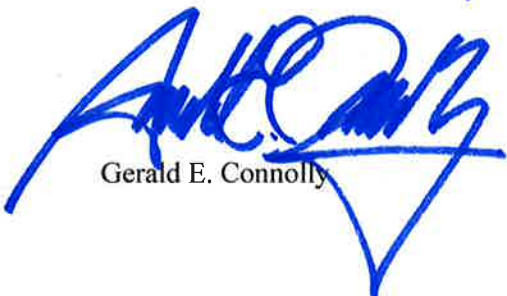
Donald S. Beyer Jr.



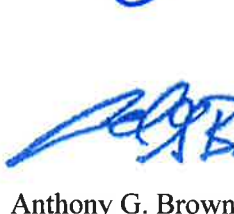
Steny Hoyer



Eleanor Holmes Norton



Gerald E. Connolly



Anthony G. Brown



Jamie Raskin