

I rise as the sponsor of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefield Protection Act, which I introduced with others.

If this looks familiar, it is because this House--you, my colleagues--passed this legislation by an overwhelming majority, this exact legislation, a little over a month ago. So here we are for take two.

I would like to thank Chairman Rahall, Chairman Grijalva, and Majority Leader Hoyer for helping to bring this legislation back to the floor after a peculiarity, a quirk in parliamentary procedure, had left the previously passed legislation lying on the roadside.

The preservation of tangible history of the United States, especially history of those formative years of our country, is essential for us to see our way forward. History is something we need now more than ever. I urge the passage of this legislation.

I rise as the sponsor of H.R. 1694, the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Battlefield Protection Act, which I introduced for myself and 12 of my colleagues. This bill may look familiar to many members, a carbon copy passed the House a little over a month ago. However, due to some procedural motions by the other body it is necessary to bring this legislation back to the floor today. I would like to thank Chairman Rahall, Chairman Grijalva, and Majority Leader Hoyer for their help in bringing this legislation back to the floor today.

This month marks the 234th anniversary of two defining and symbolic moments in our nation's early struggle for independence. On the night of April 18, 1775, Paul Revere began his legendary ride to Lexington, Massachusetts to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock that British troops were marching to arrest them. Along the way, he and his fellow riders alerted countryside residents to the British troops' approach. The next day, dozens of Colonial troops gathered at Lexington to meet the British troops head on officially starting the Revolutionary War. Ralph Waldo Emerson in his poem "The Concord Hymn," commemorated this moment as the "shot heard 'round the world." Paul Revere's Ride and the shot heard round the world are just a few of the stories of the American Revolution that help bring to life the ideals of liberty and Democracy fostered by our Nation's founders.

One can read about the American Revolution and the values that were fought for and established at that time, or read about the War of 1812 when the fledgling country fought to

maintain its independence. However, history is best experienced not by reading but by feeling, touching and living what was experienced in those trying times. There is no better way to experience the history of the founding of our great Nation than on the hallowed ground where the epic struggle for our independence took place.

Preserving these American historic treasures is essential to remembering the sacrifices that our forefathers made to secure our freedom and our independence, and it is vital for educating the current generations and future generations about our rich cultural heritage. Unfortunately, urbanization, suburban sprawl and unplanned development continually encroach on many of the significant battlefields of that period posing a severe and growing risk to the preservation of these sites.

Last spring, the National Park Service published its report to Congress on the status of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 sites. This report demonstrates that there is a great need to act and to act quickly to preserve many of these sites. Out of the 677 naturally significant battlefields and associated sites of the Revolutionary War and the

War of 1812, 99 are lost forever already; 234 are fragmented or in poor condition; an additional 170 are in danger of being destroyed within the next decade.

This bill would help State and local governments and non-profits protect and preserve these battlefields and historic sites by authorizing the use of money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to provide up to 50 percent of the costs of purchasing battlefield land threatened by sprawl and commercial development. This legislation is patterned after the successful Civil War Battlefield Protection Program that has been in effect for quite some time now.

I might add, it was an oversight, I would say, that decades ago, these battlefields and sites of the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War were not included under the same umbrella. Now is the time to do it. Now is past the time to do it.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln visited Trenton on his historic journey to his inauguration in

Washington. There, he told the New Jersey State Assembly ``In the early Revolutionary struggle, few of the States among the old Thirteen had more of the battle-fields of the country within their limits than old New-Jersey." A couple years ago, I was pleased when Congress took action to protect the battlefields in historic sites in New Jersey where this conflict took place. We passed legislation that created the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area, linking hundreds of Revolutionary War sites across 14 counties in New Jersey. New Jersey was truly the crossroads of the American Revolution for a number of reasons, and I'm pleased we are taking steps to preserve the record of those engagements.

There's a fundamental misconception that the American Revolution and War of 1812 took place only in the Northeast. In truth, the story of the American Revolution and the War of 1812 crisscrosses 33 States, from New York to Louisiana, from Georgia to Oregon. Enacting this legislation would allow each of these States to preserve better their history and their role in the War of 1812 and the American Revolution.

Today, I will be introducing legislation that will provide additional funding for the battlefield protection program created by this bill. My legislation, the American Revolution and War of 1812 Commemorative Coin Act, is modeled after the Civil War Battlefield Commemorative Coin Act of 1992, which has raised over \$6 million for battlefield preservation.

Enacting that bill will allow many more historic battlefields to be preserved. Enacting this bill will make it possible for our children and their children and other generations to enjoy and learn. We want to give Americans the opportunity to learn history, to feel history, to experience history so that they understand the principles on which this country was founded. People who know history can be better citizens, more engaged in current civic affairs and more cognizant of their place in history.

I urge my colleagues to support and vote for this important legislation.