Honor the Fallen, Stop the Arch

Bartley Collart, Arlington, Virginia

[0:00 – 1:20] Opening: The True Definition of Honor
Good [morning/evening], members of the commission and fellow citizens.

Three years ago, my son, Marine Crew Chief Spencer Collart, died a hero at just 22 years old.

He was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal—the highest possible award for non-combat heroism.

After surviving a crash and successfully escaping the aircraft, Spencer chose to go back *into* the burning wreckage to rescue his trapped pilot and copilot. Spencer died in that attempt.

Today, Spencer rests permanently right here in Arlington National Cemetery.

For me, and for thousands of Gold Star families like mine, this ground isn't an abstract landscape

or a development site.

It is a sacred sanctuary where our heroes sleep.

The proposed 250-foot triumphal arch at Memorial Circle desecrates that solemnity.

True honor is not loud, boastful, or self-serving. It is quiet. It is humble. It is defined by the absolute selflessness of men like my son.

A massive monstrosity of white marble and gold does not honor the fallen.

Frankly, it is completely out of touch with the very values our service members live and die for.

It dwarfs their sacrifice, mocks their humility, and turns a sacred space into a theatrical backdrop.

[1:20 – 2:20] The Core Argument: Breaking Historic Sightlines & Unity
"If built, this 250-foot structure will permanently block the historic, intentional sightline from the National Cemetery to the Lincoln Memorial.

Furthermore, the Memorial Bridge is not just asphalt and stone—it is a physical representation of the

North meeting the South, an architectural symbol of national unity.

Crowning that sacred threshold with a heavy-handed, multi-million-dollar monument tears at the very visual and historical fabric of our nation’s capital.

We do not need a rushed monument pushed through on November 5th without proper congressional approval or deep consideration for the families who come here to grieve."

[2:20 – 2:50] Practical Reality & Call to Action
"Arlington County and Vietnam War veterans have already filed lawsuits to stop this project because it threatens to gridlock emergency vehicle routes and disrupt the peaceful flow of military funerals.

Rushing a final vote while these lawsuits are active makes a mockery of public trust.

My son gave everything for his fellow Marines. The very least this commission can do is protect the dignity of the ground he rests upon.

Reject this abomination.

Honor the fallen.

Stop the arch.

Thank you.