To the Commissioners:

Thank you for taking my testimony. My name is Claudia Sherman. I have lived in the DMV for nearly 50 years and in the District itself for nearly 40. I am testifying today to register my very strong opposition to the proposed Monumental Arch.

In planning my testimony, I thought long and hard about what I could say that has not already been said. By its own report, this Commission had received over 1,300 comments as of the Executive Director's report date, and this does not include the comments submitted in connection with this meeting. The comments have overwhelmingly opposed the Arch. The reasons are numerous and as you well know, include objections to the truncated nature of this review process; the lack of Congressional approval; criticism of the size, design and location of the Arch; concerns about the disruption to the symbolic sight lines from the Lincoln Memorial to Arlington House; anger that the solemn and sacred nature of Arlington Memorial Cemetery will be disturbed by a gaudy tourist attraction; and very substantial vehicular, air and pedestrian safety concerns. You have received comments from historians, preservationists, architects, veterans and ordinary citizens such as me. The volume and specificity of the complaints are stunning. Yet the Executive Director's Report only notes their existence in passing and makes no attempt to address the merits of the comments or how they were weighed, if they were weighed.

My point is simple. Your website notes that you welcome public comment, but <u>why</u> do you welcome comment if your intent is to ignore it? The public is ill served by this charade of a process which is patently skewed to serve the wishes and narcissism of one man. This is a man who is not a resident of the District, who will soon be gone, and whose abiding interest is in glorifying himself, not in honoring the wishes of the community or the opinion of experts. This Arch and the process surrounding it are profoundly undemocratic. I urge the Commission to vote against its approval.