Chair and members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I testify on behalf of my grandparents, who are buried at Arlington National Cemetery. I want to protect the sacred place that holds them—and ensure that they, along with nearly half a million other patriots, continue to rest in a place that is light-filled, solemn, respectful, and peaceful.

Your statutory responsibility is clear. Whether appointed by the President or serving in an assigned seat, each of you holds a public trust to protect our nation's capital and the values it represents.

In July, you identified serious questions about the proposed Monumental Arch. The Department of the Interior has apparently submitted materials purporting to address those concerns. But receiving documents is not the same as resolving the issues.

Your responsibility is to conduct a thorough, independent, and transparent review against the capital's adopted planning framework and all applicable legal requirements. This is not only about whether the arch is attractive or its stated purpose patriotic. It is about whether it belongs where one man is relentlessly pushing to build it — and what a light-blocking arch of this size would mean for the character of the cemetery, Arlington Memorial Bridge, and surrounding historic properties.

Americans do not want this 12-member Commission to rubber-stamp this arch. You are bound by the honor of serving on this commission to scrutinize the Interior Department's assessments, exercise your own judgment, and resist political pressure to accommodate one individual's preferences.

Serious questions remain about the project's legal authority, including whether a 1925 congressional vote for two columns at Memorial Bridge is enough authorization for a 250-foot arch today. Congress and the courts will ultimately address those questions – along with the project’s funding, which is as vague and opaque as the funding for the President’s ballroom.

But you do control the decision before you today.

I urge you to take a courageous, independent, and thoughtful position. Do not rubber-stamp this proposal. Do not subordinate your statutory responsibilities to the wishes of a single President. And do not sidestep the very questions you identified as requiring scrutiny.

Your duty is not to satisfy one man. Your duty is to the American people, to our nation's capital, and to the historic places entrusted to your protection.

Please honor that duty.

Thank you. – Denise Roach, November 4, 2026