Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission:

My name is **Jose Feliciano**, and I am a proud veteran of the **United States Marine Corps**. I am here today in strong support of the proposed **Monumental Arch on Columbia Island**.

To many Americans, monuments are landmarks. To veterans, they are something much more. They are places of remembrance, reflection, healing, and gratitude. They stand as lasting reminders of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have worn our nation's uniform and defended the freedoms we enjoy every day.

For veterans, military families, and the public, these memorials provide a meaningful connection to our nation's history. They honor those who served, those who continue to serve, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. They help ensure that future generations understand the cost of freedom and the responsibility that comes with preserving it.

The proposed Monumental Arch would be a fitting addition to the historic landscape surrounding Arlington National Cemetery and the nation's capital. It would serve as a powerful symbol of service, unity, and national pride while complementing the many memorials that already recognize the contributions of America's veterans and service members.

As our nation commemorates 250 years of independence, this project presents an opportunity to create a lasting tribute that reflects the strength, courage, and commitment of generations of Americans who have answered the call to serve. The Arch would stand as an enduring symbol of national gratitude and a visible reminder that the sacrifices of our veterans will never be forgotten.

The authority for this project is clearly established under existing law, including the 1925 Act governing memorial structures on Columbia Island. This proposal is consistent with our nation's longstanding tradition of honoring military service and preserving places of remembrance that hold special significance for veterans and their families.

Additionally, in light of recent incidents involving vandalism and attacks on military monuments and memorials, I respectfully encourage that appropriate security measures be incorporated into the final design. Modern surveillance and other protective capabilities can help ensure that this monument, and the values it represents, are preserved for future generations.

This project is not about politics. It is about honor, remembrance, and respect. It is about recognizing those who stepped forward to serve something greater than themselves and ensuring that their legacy remains visible for generations to come.

I respectfully urge the Commission to approve construction of the Monumental Arch as permitted by law.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your continued support of America's veterans.

Respectfully submitted,

Jose Feliciano
United States Marine Corps Veteran