

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 253

To establish a commission to ensure a suitable observance of the centennial of World War I, and to designate memorials to the service of men and women of the United States in World War I.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 1, 2011

Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Mr. WEBB, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. BLUNT) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish a commission to ensure a suitable observance of the centennial of World War I, and to designate memorials to the service of men and women of the United States in World War I.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) From 2014 through 2018, the United
6 States and nations around the world will mark the
7 centennial of World War I, including the entry of
8 the United States into the war in April 1917.

1 (2) America’s support of Great Britain, France,
2 Belgium, and its other allies in World War I marked
3 the first time in this Nation’s history that American
4 soldiers went abroad in defense of liberty against
5 foreign aggression, and it marked the true beginning
6 of “the American century”.

7 (3) Although World War I was at the time
8 called “the war to end all wars”, in fact the United
9 States would commit its troops to the defense of for-
10 eign lands 3 more times in the 20th century.

11 (4) More than 4,000,000 men and women from
12 the United States served in uniform during World
13 War I, among them 2 future presidents, Harry S.
14 Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Two million in-
15 dividuals from the United States served overseas
16 during World War I, including 200,000 naval per-
17 sonnel who served on the seas. The United States
18 suffered 375,000 casualties during World War I, in-
19 cluding 116,516 deaths.

20 (5) The events of 1914 through 1918 shaped
21 the world, the United States, and the lives of mil-
22 lions of people in countless ways.

23 (6) The centennial of World War I offers an op-
24 portunity for people in the United States to learn

1 about and commemorate the sacrifices of their pred-
2 ecessors.

3 (7) Commemorative programs, activities, and
4 sites allow people in the United States to learn
5 about the history of World War I, the United States
6 involvement in that war, and the war's effects on the
7 remainder of the 20th century, and to commemorate
8 and honor the participation of the United States and
9 its citizens in the war effort.

10 (8) While the other great conflicts of the 20th
11 century, World War II, the Korean War, and the
12 Vietnam War, have national memorials on the Mall
13 in Washington, DC, there currently exists no nation-
14 ally recognized memorial honoring the service of the
15 United States and its citizens in World War I.

16 (9) In 1921, the people of Kansas City, Mis-
17 souri dedicated a site in that city for a memorial to
18 the service of Americans in World War I, a cere-
19 mony attended by General John J. Pershing and
20 military leaders of Great Britain, France, Belgium,
21 and Italy. In 1924, the cornerstone of the 217-foot
22 Liberty Memorial Tower was laid. On Armistice Day
23 1926, President Calvin Coolidge delivered the key-
24 note address at the Memorial's dedication ceremony.
25 The Memorial and surrounding grounds were com-

1 pleted in 1938, with an inscription that reads “In
2 Honor of Those Who Served in the World War in
3 Defense of Liberty and Our Country.”.

4 (10) The 106th Congress recognized the Lib-
5 erty Memorial as a national symbol of World War I.

6 (11) The 108th Congress designated the mu-
7 seum at the base of the Liberty Memorial as “Amer-
8 ica’s National World War I Museum”. The museum
9 preserves the history of World War I, and educates
10 and enlightens people about this significant event.

11 (12) The District of Columbia War Memorial
12 was authorized in 1924 by resolution of the 68th
13 Congress, and was dedicated on Armistice Day 1931
14 by President Herbert Hoover. The DC War Memo-
15 rial, erected in memory of the 499 residents of the
16 District of Columbia who died in World War I, is
17 often overlooked by residents and visitors to Wash-
18 ington.

19 (13) The DC War Memorial is located on the
20 national Mall in Washington, adjacent to the World
21 War II, Korean War, and Vietnam memorials. Of
22 these memorials, which now compose a quartet of
23 memorials to the 4 great wars of the American Cen-
24 tury, only the DC War Memorial is not a national
25 memorial.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to—

3 (1) establish a commission, in Kansas City,
4 Missouri, to ensure a suitable national observance of
5 the centennial of World War I; and

6 (2) rededicate the Liberty Memorial of Kansas
7 City and the District of Columbia War Memorial, re-
8 spectively, as the “National World War I Museum
9 and Memorial” and the “District of Columbia and
10 National World War I Memorial”.

11 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

12 In this Act:

13 (1) AMERICA’S NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MU-
14 SEUM.—The term “America’s National World War I
15 Museum” means the Liberty Memorial Museum in
16 Kansas City, Missouri, as recognized by Congress in
17 section 1031(b) of the Ronald W. Reagan National
18 Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005
19 (Public Law 108–375; 118 Stat. 2045).

20 (2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
21 means the World War I Centennial Commission es-
22 tablished by section 4(a).

23 (3) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The
24 term “veterans service organization” means any or-
25 ganization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans

1 Affairs for the representation of veterans under sec-
2 tion 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

3 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

4 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a com-
5 mission to be known as the “World War I Centennial
6 Commission”.

7 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

8 (1) **COMPOSITION.**—The Commission shall be
9 composed of 24 members as follows:

10 (A) Four members who shall be appointed
11 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

12 (B) Three members who shall be appointed
13 by the minority leader of the House of Rep-
14 resentatives.

15 (C) Four members who shall be appointed
16 by the majority leader of the Senate.

17 (D) Three members who shall be appointed
18 by the minority leader of the Senate.

19 (E) Seven members who shall be appointed
20 by the President from among persons who are
21 broadly representative of the people of the
22 United States (including members of the Armed
23 Forces, veterans, and representatives of vet-
24 erans service organizations).

1 (F) One member who shall be appointed by
2 the executive director of the Veterans of For-
3 eign Wars of the United States.

4 (G) One member who shall be appointed by
5 the executive director of the American Legion.

6 (H) One member who shall be appointed
7 by the president of the Liberty Memorial Asso-
8 ciation.

9 (2) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Each member
10 shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

11 (3) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission
12 shall be filled in the manner in which the original
13 appointment was made.

14 (4) INITIAL MEETING.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days
16 after the date on which all members of the
17 Commission have been appointed, the Commis-
18 sion shall hold its first meeting.

19 (B) LOCATION.—The location for the
20 meeting held under subparagraph (A) shall be
21 the America's National World War I Museum.

22 (5) MEETINGS.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall
24 meet at the call of the Chair.

1 (B) FREQUENCY.—The Chair shall call a
2 meeting of the members of the Commission not
3 less frequently than once each year.

4 (C) LOCATION.—Not less frequently than
5 once each year, the Commission shall meet at
6 the America’s National World War I Museum.

7 (6) QUORUM.—Thirteen members of the Com-
8 mission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser num-
9 ber may hold hearings.

10 (7) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—The Commission
11 shall select a Chair and Vice Chair from among its
12 members.

13 **SEC. 5. DUTIES.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—The duties of the Commission are
15 as follows:

16 (1) To plan, develop, and execute programs,
17 projects, and activities to commemorate the centen-
18 nial of World War I.

19 (2) To encourage private organizations and
20 State and local governments to organize and partici-
21 pate in activities commemorating the centennial of
22 World War I.

23 (3) To facilitate and coordinate activities
24 throughout the United States relating to the centen-
25 nial of World War I.

1 (4) To serve as a clearinghouse for the collec-
2 tion and dissemination of information about events
3 and plans for the centennial of World War I.

4 (5) To develop recommendations for Congress
5 and the President for commemorating the centennial
6 of World War I.

7 (b) REPORTS.—

8 (1) PERIODIC REPORT.—Beginning not later
9 than the last day of the 3-month period beginning
10 on the date described in section 10 and the last day
11 of each 3-month period thereafter, the Commission
12 shall submit to Congress and the President a report
13 on the activities and plans of the Commission.

14 (2) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 2
15 years after the date described in section 10, the
16 Commission shall submit to Congress and the Presi-
17 dent a report containing specific recommendations
18 for commemorating the centennial of World War I
19 and coordinating related activities.

20 **SEC. 6. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

21 (a) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such
22 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
23 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission
24 considers appropriate to carry out the purposes of this
25 Act.

1 (b) POWERS OF MEMBER AND AGENTS.—If author-
2 ized by the Commission, any member or agent of the Com-
3 mission may take any action which the Commission is au-
4 thorized to take under this Act.

5 (c) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The
6 Commission shall secure directly from any Federal depart-
7 ment or agency such information as the Commission con-
8 siders necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.
9 Upon the request of the Chair of the Commission, the
10 head of such department or agency shall furnish such in-
11 formation to the Commission.

12 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
13 the request of the Commission, the Administrator of the
14 General Services Administration shall provide to the Com-
15 mission, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative sup-
16 port services necessary for the Commission to carry out
17 its responsibilities under this Act.

18 (e) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
20 graph (2), the Commission is authorized—

21 (A) to procure supplies, services, and prop-
22 erty; and

23 (B) to make or enter into contracts, leases,
24 or other legal agreements.

1 (2) LIMITATION.—The Commission may not
2 enter into any contract, lease, or other legal agree-
3 ment that extends beyond the date of the termi-
4 nation of the Commission under section 8(a).

5 (f) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
6 the United States mails in the same manner and under
7 the same conditions as other departments and agencies of
8 the Federal Government.

9 (g) GIFTS, BEQUESTS, AND DEVISES.—

10 (1) ACCEPTANCE BY COMMISSION.—The Com-
11 mission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts, be-
12 quests, or devises of services or property, both real
13 and personal, for the purpose of aiding or facili-
14 tating the work of the Commission.

15 (2) DEPOSIT AND AVAILABILITY.—Gifts, be-
16 quests, or devises of money and proceeds from sales
17 of other property received as gifts, bequests, or de-
18 vises shall be deposited in the Treasury of the
19 United States and shall be available for disburse-
20 ment upon order of the Commission.

21 **SEC. 7. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

22 (a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Members of the
23 Commission shall serve without compensation for such
24 service.

1 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Com-
2 mission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per
3 diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with the applica-
4 ble provisions of title 5, United States Code.

5 (c) STAFF.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chair of the Commis-
7 sion shall, in consultation with the members of the
8 Commission, appoint an executive director and such
9 other additional personnel as may be necessary to
10 enable the Commission to perform its duties.

11 (2) COMPENSATION.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
13 graph (B), the Chair of the Commission may
14 fix the compensation of the executive director
15 and any other personnel appointed under para-
16 graph (1).

17 (B) LIMITATION.—The Chair of the Com-
18 mission may not fix the compensation of the ex-
19 ecutive director or other personnel appointed
20 under paragraph (1) at a rate that exceeds the
21 rate of payable for level IV of the Executive
22 Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United
23 States Code.

24 (C) WORK LOCATION.—If the city govern-
25 ment for Kansas City, Missouri, and the Lib-

1 erty Memorial Association make space available
2 in the building in which the America’s National
3 World War I Museum is located, the executive
4 director of the Commission and other personnel
5 appointed under paragraph (1) shall work in
6 such building to the extent practical.

7 (d) **DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.**—Upon
8 request of the Commission, the head of any Federal de-
9 partment or agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis,
10 any employee of that department or agency to the Com-
11 mission to assist it in carrying out its duties under this
12 Act.

13 (e) **PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-**
14 **TENT SERVICES.**—The Chair of the Commission may pro-
15 cure temporary and intermittent services under section
16 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

17 **SEC. 8. TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION.**

18 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Commission shall terminate
19 on the earlier of—

20 (1) the date that is 30 days after the date of
21 the completion of the activities under this Act hon-
22 oring the centennial observation of World War I; or

23 (2) July 28, 2019.

24 (b) **APPLICATION OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COM-**
25 **MITTEE ACT.**—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
 2 graph (2), the provisions of the Federal Advisory
 3 Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall apply to the
 4 activities of the Commission under this Act.

5 (2) EXCEPTION.—Section 14(a)(2) of such Act
 6 shall not apply to the Commission.

7 **SEC. 9. DESIGNATION OF NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MEMO-**
 8 **RIALS.**

9 (a) DESIGNATION OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR
 10 I MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL, MISSOURI.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Liberty Memorial of
 12 Kansas City at the America’s National World War
 13 I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, is designated as
 14 the “National World War I Museum and Memorial”.

15 (2) CEREMONIES.—The Commission may plan,
 16 develop, and execute ceremonies to rededicate the
 17 Liberty Memorial of Kansas City as the National
 18 World War I Museum and Memorial.

19 (b) DESIGNATION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
 20 AND NATIONAL WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL.—

21 (1) DESIGNATION.—The District of Columbia
 22 War Memorial in Washington, DC, is designated as
 23 the “District of Columbia and National World War
 24 I Memorial”.

1 (2) CEREMONIES.—The Commission may plan,
2 develop, and execute ceremonies to rededicate the
3 District of Columbia War Memorial as the District
4 of Columbia and National World War I Memorial.

5 (3) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH COMMEMORA-
6 TIVE WORK.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—The World War I Me-
8 morial Foundation may establish a commemora-
9 tive work at the site of the District of Columbia
10 and National World War I Memorial consisting
11 of an appropriate sculptural or other commemo-
12 rative element reflecting the national character
13 of the memorial.

14 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—Any commemorative
15 work established under subparagraph (A) shall
16 complement and preserve the memorial (includ-
17 ing the landscape of the memorial), as in exist-
18 ence on the date of enactment of this Act.

19 (4) COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS FOR COM-
20 MEMORATIVE WORKS; LOCATION OF MEMORIAL.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
22 graph (B), the rededication of the District of
23 Columbia and National World War I Memorial
24 shall be in accordance with chapter 89 of title
25 40, United States Code.

1 (B) CONGRESSIONAL FINDING.—Congress
2 finds that because this Act authorizes the re-
3 dedication and related enhancement of a com-
4 memorative work that, as of the date of enact-
5 ment of this Act, is in existence and is sited
6 within the Reserve (as defined in section
7 8902(a)(3) of title 40, United States Code), the
8 provisions regarding site approval and location
9 of commemorative works under sections 8905
10 and 8908(c) of title 40, United States Code, do
11 not apply to this Act.

12 (5) DEPOSIT OF EXCESS FUNDS.—The World
13 War I Memorial Foundation shall transmit to the
14 Secretary of the Treasury for deposit in the account
15 provided for in section 8906(b)(3) of title 40, United
16 States Code—

17 (A) any funds that remain after payment
18 of all expenses incurred in the rededication of
19 the memorial (including payment of the amount
20 for maintenance and preservation required
21 under section 8906(b) of that title); or

22 (B) any funds that remain for the com-
23 memorative work authorized under subsection
24 (a) on expiration of the authority for the com-

1 memorative work under section 8903(e) of that
2 title.

3 **SEC. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

4 This Act takes effect on the date that is 90 days after
5 the date of enactment of this Act.

○