

**Testimony of Congressman Todd Russell Platts  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands  
Thursday January 21, 2010**

Good morning, Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Baird. I appreciate this opportunity to testify before your Committee regarding legislation that I have introduced to expand the boundaries of the Gettysburg National Military Park (H.R. 4395). I would also like to thank the Acting Superintendent at Gettysburg, Mel Poole, and his staff for their guidance regarding this effort. I am pleased that Superintendent Poole is here with us today.

Mr. Chairman, Gettysburg is a unique and special place. When I travel around the country, I am always proud to talk to individuals about the District that I represent in Central Pennsylvania, including Carlisle, PA - home of the U.S. Army War College - as well as my home town of York where the Continental Congress met for nine months in 1777 and adopted the Articles of Confederation. No town that I mention gets quite the reaction,

however, as Gettysburg. Not only did Gettysburg host the battle that marked the turning point of the Civil War in 1863, but it is also where President Abraham Lincoln gave one of the most historic addresses in our Nation's history.

Legislation that I have introduced would expand the boundaries of the Gettysburg National Military Park to include the historic Lincoln Train Station, as well as a 45 acre plot of land at the southern base of Big Round Top, in order to ensure preservation of these properties for generations to come. Both pieces of land are historically significant.

The Lincoln Train Station served as a hospital during the time of the battle and was used to transport wounded and dead soldiers back to their homes. The station is also where President Lincoln arrived when he visited Gettysburg to give his historic Gettysburg Address in November 1863. The 1858 structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is currently owned by the Borough of Gettysburg. The Borough uses the station as a visitors' center. However, due to a lack of funding and

available volunteers, it is unable to keep the center open on a regularly scheduled basis. The Borough of Gettysburg supports this legislation and wishes for the National Park Service to acquire this historic parcel.

The 45 acre parcel of land at the base of Big Round Top hosted cavalry skirmishes in July 1863 and currently contains critical wetlands and wildlife habitat associated with Plum Run. The Gettysburg Foundation currently owns this piece of land and would like to donate it “fee title interest” to the National Park Service (NPS) once it is added to the Park’s boundary.

As we all know, the NPS is tasked with preserving and maintaining almost 400 significant parks. Like all federal agencies, the NPS works within a constrained budget to allocate resources efficiently and effectively. I am sensitive to the current obligations of the NPS and believe that we should expand its commitments with thoughtfulness and without haste.

I strongly believe that the two additions proposed by my legislation are historically significant and would add great value to

the Park's already impressive resources. I commend the Committee for its continued support of the NPS and, in particular, the Gettysburg National Military Park. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have for me regarding this legislation. Thank you.