



House of Representatives

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STANDING COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
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STATEMENT of Michael Cheokas, Representative, Georgia House of Representatives.

MAY 14, 2009

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the occasion to appear before you today to present the views of the Georgia House of Representatives on H.R. 1471.

The Georgia House of Representatives supports the enactment of H.R. 1471. This legislation would positively impact the economies of the town of Plains, the city of Americus, Sumter County, the State of Georgia. In light of our country's financial times, this legislation would be a small ray of hope that would create jobs in the private sector long and short term.

We understand that this legislation would add new lands to the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. This is welcome news. The Park has never been truly completed. Even though the National Park Service has done a terrific job of maintaining and preserving the grounds and structures that they currently have, facilities such as the curatorial "Bally Building" were to be a temporary storage for the park's historical pieces. This building is not only unsightly and located on a quaint and picturesque street, but it also has been there temporarily in excess of ten years! Next to it is the Park's maintenance facility which holds tractors, lawn mowers, two temporary sheds, six large garbage cans and other miscellaneous items. To say that it does not fit in with the surrounding historical structures let alone the surrounding neighborhood would be a huge understatement.



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The legislation would also create new opportunities that would allow people of all walks of life to enjoy a walk back in time in our country's proud history. The items to be included in the legislation would provide our fellow Americans rich historical perspectives of President Jimmy Carter and rural life in America years ago. In excess of 75,000 people visit the park every year. The need for camping facilities is great, as Americans look for less expensive ways to have a vacation. "Staycation" is a growing phenomena during our economic times. The proposed campground would fit in with right in with what our fellow citizen's desire and need. The proposed multiuse trail would provide a safe outlet for outdoor activity, as visitors young and old could walk or bike ride away from dangerous traffic in a landscape of farms, old scenic homes and trees. The idea of the trail connecting the campground, town of Plains and the Boyhood home significantly enhances its appeal.

The addition of the Haunted House and Billy Carter's Service Station would complete the historical venue that makes up this incredible site. Already, media outlets from around the world have come to Plains to visit the Haunted House and the Service Station. They are pieces of history that if preserved and maintained, will provide endless opportunities of enjoyment to millions of people.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you deeply for taking the time to listen to my remarks. This concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or any members of the Subcommittee may have.