



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

May 2, 2022

The Honorable Josh Hawley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hawley:

Thank you for your letter dated April 28, 2022, to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland concerning Honor Flight escorts conducted by the United States Park Police (USPP). In your letter, you requested that the USPP continue to provide law enforcement escorts for Honor Flight visits to Washington, DC. We are happy to report that earlier today, the National Park Service and the Honor Flight Network made a public announcement about their continued work together, a copy of which is enclosed.

This past Friday, leadership from the USPP and the National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) met with the Honor Flight Network and shared some of our concerns. Prior to The Honor Flight Network suspending trips to DC in spring of 2020 it was increasingly difficult for USPP to consistently provide sufficient law enforcement officers to support the nearly 300 honor flight escorts each year. Historically, USPP has also escorted groups to and from all three area airports using emergency lights and sirens to expedite movement through congested traffic, a practice that is now recognized to be inconsistent with modern law enforcement best practices in non-emergency situations. In a shared commitment to a safety-first approach, the Honor Flight Network and USPP will focus law enforcement support around the National Mall and memorials area of USPP jurisdiction in Washington, DC.

Going forward, the USPP and park rangers from NAMA will meet the Honor Flight group at their chosen memorial, facilitate parking, meet with the veterans, and respond to any calls for emergency services needed by the group. Park rangers will deliver a program about any of the memorials, if desired. USPP will provide a ceremonial escort between memorials. These escorts will facilitate the safe transport of Honor Flights groups between the World War II Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial by providing temporary road closures and a law enforcement lead vehicle to guide them to each location. Ceremonial escort support will generally end at Arlington National Cemetery.

We are immeasurably grateful for the service of our veterans and humbled by the sacrifice of all who have served our country. We appreciate your strong interest in the National Park Service and for your engagement on this issue. Please know that we are committed to continuing to work with the Honor Flight Network. If you have any questions, please contact Acting USPP Chief Chris Stock at Christopher_Stock@nps.gov or by phone at (202) 619-7350.

A similar response is being sent to the cosigner of your letter.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Park Service

Enclosure