Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2015

Mr. Jonathan Jarvis
Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Jarvis:

We write to urge the National Park Service (NPS) to undertake a reconnaissance survey to explore the suitability of designating the President James A. Garfield Memorial at Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio, as an "affiliated area" under the NPS. This site reflects a tremendous amount of significance historically, architecturally, and educationally. Official NPS recognition of this structure would demonstrate the rich historic and aesthetic importance of the memorial.

President James Garfield was an exceptional American whose successes spanned many fields of human endeavor, made all the more remarkable given his humble beginnings. He was an ardent abolitionist and an ordained minister whose oratorical skills and biblical knowledge were renowned. He was a professor of classics at what is now Hiram College, where he later became the school's president. As a major general in the Union Army during the Civil War, he led multiple successful campaigns. Most notably, he was entrusted to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and as President of the United States.

To serve as the final resting place for President Garfield, leaders established a commission to solicit and review designs from across the country for his burial site at Lake View Cemetery. People from around the world donated funds to erect the memorial. Famed architect George Keller's winning design included three themes reflective of President Garfield's unique roles as teacher, soldier, and statesman. It was such a tremendous undertaking that the design, excavation, and construction took over six years to complete, finally opening in 1890.

Today, the Garfield Memorial draws 35,000 visitors annually. These visitors come for many purposes. Chief among them is to learn about this distinguished president. Art enthusiasts are drawn to the glasswork, dome mosaic, and terra cotta panels.

In addition to designating the Garfield Memorial an "affiliated area" for historic and aesthetic purposes, the designation would serve another key function. The memorial is in need of restoration, as many structural and aesthetic elements of the memorial are deteriorating. To keep this landmark open to the public, Lake View and many of its partners are in the process of undertaking a restoration. We believe that the NPS designation of the memorial would draw increased appreciation for and awareness of the memorial, thus leveraging additional philanthropic funds to the restoration.

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We believe the President James A. Garfield Memorial demonstrates clear historic value to the nation and would appreciate you giving all due consideration to our request for a reconnaissance study. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator

Rob Portman
U.S. Senator

David P. Joyce
U.S. Representative

Marcia L. Fudge
U.S. Representative