



January 25, 2018

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Representative of the 12<sup>th</sup> District, New York  
Congress of the United States, House of Representatives  
2308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-3212

Dear Congresswoman Maloney,

Women In Defense strongly supports H.R. 19, the Smithsonian Women's History Museum Act. As an organization dedicated to education and professional development, we strongly believe the nation needs a world-class museum of "herstory," where Americans can go to learn about the enormous impact women have had on establishing and enriching the United States.

We believe Americans cannot understand and value women's contributions if they don't know about those contributions. There is no U.S. museum that consolidates and highlights the broad contributions of American women in areas ranging from science to engineering, from business to literature, and from agriculture to medicine.

We also strongly support the National Mall as the location for the new museum, because there's no better choice than "America's front yard." Over the course of our nation's history, each generation established museums, monuments, and memorials in the heart of our capital to honor our greatest citizens and accomplishments. Smithsonian museums celebrate history, art, the natural world, and technological marvels earlier generations never imagined, and they act as a magnet for Americans to visit their capital city. Yet, while many of these museums include exhibits that recognize women's contributions, those contributions are secondary to the primary purpose of each respective museum. And the memorials and monuments on the National Mall almost exclusively honor men. Only the Vietnam Nurses Memorial specifically highlights women's contributions, and it was dedicated 11 years after the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, making it almost an afterthought.

Women's contributions to the United States should never be an afterthought. The United States must recognize and celebrate the work and achievements of the women who helped found this country, who sustained it through war and peace, who helped grow it into an economic powerhouse and rebuild it after economic downturns, and who created some of America's greatest works of art and literature. Women deserve a prominent place for our stories on the National Mall where Americans honor our greatest heroes and most significant achievements. We need a museum of "herstory" where Americans can learn, share, and understand how women played a vital role in creating the world's greatest democracy.

It's time for a "Museum of Herstory" in America's front yard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel A. McCaffrey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rachel A. McCaffrey  
Executive Director, Women in Defense