



CONGRESSMAN  
**Jody Hice**  
PROUDLY REPRESENTING THE 10TH DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

## Funding the Park Police

Dear Friends,

On July 4, thousands of Americans gathered on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. to take in the annual Independence Day fireworks display. The event was a peaceful and joyful occasion – and that’s largely thanks to the efforts of the United States Park Police.

The U.S. Park Police are the uniformed law enforcement officers of the National Park Service with jurisdiction over National Parks in D.C., such as the National Mall, and other smaller locations like the Statue of Liberty in New York City and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. Founded by George Washington in the earliest days of the republic, the Park Police is one of the oldest law enforcement agencies in the country.

The Park Police serve on the frontlines of nearly every protest in D.C. – including the Black Lives Matter riots last summer and the Capitol riot on January 6. Despite the critical importance of their mission, these officers are underpaid, overworked, and short-staffed!

In recent years, the number of demonstrations, security threats, acts of vandalism, and civil disturbances has increased significantly, and the Park Police have been stretched thin. While the department’s staff requirements call for a minimum of 639 officers and the force ideally should have nearly 850, there are fewer than 500 Park Police officers as of March 1, 2021. As a result, many support positions are going unfilled, and officers are routinely working longer shifts.

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One of the core problems is that the Park Police is at a serious disadvantage with other D.C. area law enforcement regarding pay and benefits. Agencies like the Secret Service, Capitol Police, FBI, ATF, and U.S. Marshalls all offer more generous pay grades and retirement benefits, and officers often begin their careers with the Park Police but quickly leave for other agencies. This situation needs to be fixed!

Across the country, Democrats and the radical Left have undermined law enforcement agencies and launched vicious attacks on police officers. Pushing back on the insane “Defund the Police” movement requires us to proactively support law enforcement and ensure these brave men and women have the resources they need to protect our communities.

I have introduced the U.S. Park Police Modernization Act, H.R. 3924, to improve the Park Police’s pay and benefits to put the agency on equal footing with similar departments such as the U.S. Capitol Police and the U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division. I believe this legislation will greatly incentivize officers to join and stay with the Park Police and ensure that Americans visiting national landmarks can do so in a safe and secure environment.

Endorsed by the unions of the U.S. Park Police and U.S. Capitol Police, as well as the Fraternal Order of Police, I am hopeful that we will be able to get this legislation across the finish line and I am currently working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get it there!

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## **Nancy Reagan Memorial Park**

Today, on the 100th birthday of former First Lady Nancy Reagan, I reintroduced legislation renaming Gravelly Point Park in Arlington County, Virginia as the Nancy Reagan Memorial Park.

Through some of America’s most pivotal moments, Mrs. Reagan was a trusted adviser, confidant and, most importantly, devoted spouse to our 40<sup>th</sup> President, Ronald Reagan. Since her passing in 2016, I believe it is important to preserve Mrs. Reagan’s legacy so that future generations can appreciate her contributions to our great nation.

Gravelly Point Park is located next to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and is a popular spot for families and friends to picnic along the Potomac River while watching planes fly in and out of the airport. As the park's current name has no historical significance or special meaning and given its proximity to the airport named for her husband, this is an excellent location to celebrate Mrs. Reagan's memory!

I hope that my colleagues from both parties can come together to name this beautiful spot in honor of the former First Lady who did so much for America.

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## **Mobile Office Hours**

One of the most important responsibilities I have as a Member of Congress is to help people who have problems with federal agencies. So whether you're a traveler in need of a passport, a business owner facing tax penalties, or a veteran seeking well-deserved benefits, if you need help cutting through the red tape or finding a solution, my office is here to help. Meet with a member of my staff during our July Mobile Office Hours in Jefferson or Washington County, or pick up the phone and call us any weekday from nine to five at 770-207-1776 or 762-445-1776.

My staff will be available to meet with residents on an individual or family basis at the following locations (appointments are not required):

### **Jefferson County**

Monday, July 19, 2021

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Rabun Community Center

Wrens City Hall

101 McNair Street

Wrens, GA 30833

### **Washington County**

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Washington County Chamber of Commerce

603 South Harris St.

Sandersville, GA 31082

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## Travel Plans & Passports

My office has received several requests from travelers who are desperate to secure valid passports. In most cases, I'm happy to say that we've been able to expedite processing or help travelers obtain emergency passport appointments. But there are no guarantees when travel plans are last minute. So if you're traveling internationally this year, please be sure to do the following:

- **Check expiration dates.** Before you book your trip or purchase an airline ticket, check the expiration dates of your family members' passports. Children's passports are valid for five years only.
- **Apply early.** Apply at least six months in advance of your planned departure date.
- **Use trackable mail** to quickly ship the application to the Passport Agency and purchase overnight delivery for the agency to return the completed passport.
- **Ensure applications are accurate and complete.** Any issues with citizenship, ID, fees, or photos could cause delays well beyond the original 18 weeks.

Yes, you heard that right – 18 weeks! Given the extremely high demand and extremely low availability of appointments, the Passport Agency cannot guarantee appointments for all travelers. Therefore, it must continue to prioritize applicants with life-or-death travel. Here's the reality:

- **Routine service can take up to 18 weeks** from the day a customer submits their application to the day they receive a new passport. The 18-week timeframe includes up to 12 weeks for application processing and up

to six weeks for mailing times on the front and back end.

- **Expedited service can take up to 12 weeks** from the day a customer submits their application to the day they receive a new passport. The 12-week timeframe includes up to six weeks for application processing and up to six weeks for mailing times on the front and back end.

It's also a good idea to send your applications via trackable mail. This allows you to track your application before it enters the passport system and can be done whether you are applying at an acceptance facility or by mail. You may also pay an extra \$17.56 for 1-2 day delivery for the return of your new passports. For these and other tips regarding passport services, go online to [travel.state.gov/passports](https://travel.state.gov/passports).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Alice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.