

For Immediate Release: January 23, 2012

Washington, D.C.— Legislation introduced by Representative Duncan Hunter, H.R. 290, the War Memorial Protection Act, will be considered by the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 24, 2012. The War Memorial Protection Act—which allows for the inclusion of religious symbols on war memorials—was introduced by Hunter in response to a ruling by the Ninth Circuit, declaring San Diego's Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial unconstitutional.

“Last week's helicopter crash in Afghanistan, killing six Marines, is a somber reminder of the extraordinary danger facing our military men and women, even in the most routine missions,” said Representative Hunter. “These Marines, like all others who have served or made the ultimate sacrifice, are proudly represented by war memorials across the country and beyond our shores.

“In some cases, these sites—such as the case with the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial or any of our national cemeteries—include symbols of personal and religious faith. These symbols don't change the fact that war memorials stand for the purpose of honoring those who served and sacrificed in defense of the nation.

“Any war memorial on federal property deserves protection, regardless of the religious symbol that's displayed. What's important is paying tribute to America's veterans and fallen heroes, who have given and sacrificed so much to protect the freedoms and rights of others.”

For the 131 national cemeteries under the purview of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 48 distinct emblems of belief are currently authorized, including symbols for Atheists, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Muslims.