

For Immediate Release: *July 19, 2012*

Washington, D.C.—Last night, Representative Brian Bilbray successfully offered an amendment, coauthored by Representative Duncan Hunter, to prohibit the use of federal funding for purposes of dismantling any portion of the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California. The amendment was offered during House floor consideration of the Fiscal Year 2013 Defense Appropriations Act.

The Bilbray-Hunter amendment followed a letter sent to Attorney General Eric Holder earlier in the day, insisting that the Mount Soledad Memorial Association be allowed to participate in ongoing settlement negotiations between the DOJ and the ACLU. The negotiations were revealed only when both parties jointly filed to delay the July 26 hearing date as they work towards an agreement. A copy of the letter is available [here](#).

“In a bipartisan fashion, our colleagues in the House of Representatives unanimously passed our amendment to prohibit the use of Department of Defense funds to tear down the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial,” said Bilbray. “The memorial is not only a symbol of our veterans’ sacrifice, but it is a symbol of what they fought for, religious tolerance.”

Hunter added, “Negotiating in good faith and in the best interest of the Memorial is only possible if the Memorial Association is invited to the table,” said Congressman Duncan Hunter. “The fact that the Association has been excluded from the negotiations is a problem. This suggests that DOJ, which has been less than enthusiastic about doing its job of defending the Memorial as required by law, would much rather come to an agreement so that it can move on to the next thing.

“The veterans who are represented by the Memorial served and sacrificed to protect the same freedom that is now being used to denigrate their contribution. And if DOJ is willing to cede to the unreasonable demands of the ACLU, then every religious symbol on a war memorial from Fort Rosecrans to Arlington Cemetery will be at risk.”