

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Mark-Up Memorandum

January 12, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Will Layden
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: **H.R. 443 (Rep. Scott DesJarlais)**, To direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the James K. Polk Home in Columbia, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes
January 17, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 443, James K. Polk Presidential Home Study Act

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 443, introduced by Representative Scott DesJarlais [R-TN-04], authorizes the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a feasibility study of the James K. Polk home in Columbia, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Parks System.

Cosponsors

Rep. Marsha Blackburn [R-TN-07]

Background

James K. Polk, the 11th president of the United States, lived in Columbia, Tennessee, from 1819 until 1824. Nominated as the first "dark-horse" presidential candidate, Polk unified a split Democratic Party to defeat Henry Clay of the Whig Party, assuming office in 1844. Despite only serving for one term, Polk is considered by some to be the most efficient President, accomplishing all the domestic and foreign policy goals established during his campaign. Although frequently overshadowed by his predecessor, Andrew Jackson, Polk is credited with a wide range of policy accomplishments, most notably expanding the western territorial holdings of the United States through the Mexican-American War and the establishment of the U.S. Naval Academy. Polk left office in 1849, returning to Nashville, Tennessee, where he lived for three months before his death.

The James K. Polk home in Columbia, Tennessee, was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1961. In April 2015, the NPS completed a reconnaissance survey of the home and determined that the site warrants a special resource study to analyze the suitability, feasibility, and need for the NPS to manage the James K. Polk home. The NPS recommended that Congress consider authorizing a special resource study for the site. The James K. Polk home is the only surviving residence of President Polk, and contains original artifacts from his estate.

H.R. 443 authorizes a special resource study of the James K. Polk home to evaluate its national significance, the suitability and feasibility for potential designation of the area as a unit of the National Park System, and the need for NPS management of the resource versus management by other public or private entities. The study is informational; Congress would still have to act on separate legislation to establish the site as a unit of the National Park System.

A similar bill, S. 99, sponsored by Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), was favorably reported by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on May 3, 2017.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill, but has scored the companion Senate bill as costing approximately \$200,000, subject to appropriation.

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.