



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

Courthouse Plaza II, Suite 500
2300 Clarendon Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201-3367

Established by Congress 1923

March 28, 2012

William N. Brown, President
The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants
of the District of Columbia
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW
Washington, DC 20007-2010

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for your letter of March 5, 2012, which seeks the support of the American Battle Monuments Commission for your efforts to recognize and designate the American Expeditionary Forces Memorial as the National World War I Memorial.

We are on public record as stating that we believe the intent of the Commission in building the Pershing Park AEF Memorial was to nationally recognize those who served our Nation in uniform during World War I. We also are on record that we do not believe it is appropriate for the District of Columbia World War I Memorial, which was built and funded by the citizens of the District to honor its war dead, to be given a "national memorial" designation simply because it has the coincidence of a National Mall site. In fact, we also have stated publicly that a memorial does not have to be located in Washington, D.C. to carry a "national" designation. Some perceive that a memorial not located on the National Mall loses significance; we do not agree.

The forum for these statements has been the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC), of which we are a member. When legislation is proposed relating to memorials in the National Capital Region, the first review of the bill occurs at the NCMAC. However, other than that forum, at which we are charged with the responsibility to comment on proposed legislation, it is not appropriate for ABMC, a federal agency, to lobby on behalf of legislative proposals. Accordingly, we cannot publicly endorse your legislative objectives.

Most respectfully,

Max Cleland
Secretary