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Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

In light of comments made by Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke earlier this week at a Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hearing regarding access to National Parks, AMVETS wanted to reach out to you prior to today's hearing.

AMVETS works hard to advocate for those who serve this country, and we are proud of our Americanism program which aims to inspire patriotism in the youth of America. The future of our military depends on "Americanism," and the number of people who qualify to join the military under current standards is quickly decreasing as the United States faces the longest period of armed conflict in its history.

Secretary Zinke, as a veteran, should know this. Revoking discounted entry to our National Parks for veterans, the disabled, and the elderly can only be categorized as a blatant insult to those who stood up and served in the military, those with daily challenges of living with a disability, and our elderly who live in a country that sadly seems to be losing reverence for those that came before them. Blaming this group of Americans as Zinke floats hiking entry fees for others is also a needless insult and burden.

Surely the Secretary can consider more palatable cost-saving measures other than nickel and diming our veterans, the disabled, and the elderly while perpetuating disrespect of those who deserve more from the leaders of this country.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. CHENELLY
Executive Director