

GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP ACT

MARCH 2, 2026.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 5254]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 5254) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Gateway Partnership Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) FOUNDATION.—The term “Foundation” means the Gateway Arch Park Foundation, a nonprofit organization that serves as the official philanthropic partner of the Park.
- (2) PARK.—The term “Park” means Gateway Arch National Park.
- (3) PARK BUILDING.—The term “Park building” means—
 - (A) the Arch Visitor Center;
 - (B) the Old Courthouse; and
 - (C) any other building administered or managed by the Secretary as part of the Park that is open to the public.
- (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. GATEWAY ARCH NATIONAL PARK PARTNER AGREEMENT PILOT PROJECT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in accordance with subsection (b), may enter into a one-time agreement for a period not to exceed five years with the Foundation to host private events at the Park, which may include the use of Park buildings.

(b) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—An agreement entered into under subsection (a) shall include terms and conditions to protect the resources and values of the Park, including—

- (1) dates and times during which the Foundation may be the exclusive organization that holds a special event in specified Park buildings;
- (2)(A) the maximum number of events that can be held per month; and
- (B) appropriate National Park Service staffing levels necessary to ensure public safety and resource protection during such events;
- (3) liability insurance in an amount sufficient to protect the interests of the United States that lists the United States as additionally insured;
- (4) a provision stating that the Federal Government and agents and employees of the Federal Government will not be held liable for claims for damages or suits for any injuries or deaths from any cause resulting from the occupancy and use of specified Park buildings by the Foundation;
- (5) a provision allowing for the modification or cancellation of the terms and conditions of the agreement, except that any modified agreement shall still comply with the terms and conditions described in subparagraphs (1) through (4); and
- (6) any other terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate.
- (c) USE.—Private events hosted at the Park or in Park buildings through an agreement entered into under subsection (a)—
 - (1) shall be limited to activities—
 - (A) consistent with the purposes of the Park; and
 - (B) compatible with National Park Service programs;
 - (2) shall not include activities that degrade the integrity, appearance, or purposes of the Park; and
 - (3) shall not take place during times or in locations that prevent or disrupt public use or access to the Park or Park buildings.
- (d) RECOVERY OF COSTS.—In entering into an agreement under subsection (a), the Secretary—
 - (1) shall charge a fee to cover the cost of maintaining the Park and Park buildings with respect to wear and tear resulting from the private events; and
 - (2) notwithstanding any other provision of law, may recover all costs incurred as a result of the private events and use of the Park and Park buildings, including maintenance, utilities, administrative expenses, security, and personnel costs.
- (e) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE-SPONSORED EVENTS.—Nothing in this Act prevents the National Park Service from hosting events or issuing permits to other individuals or entities for special events or otherwise, as appropriate, in the Park or Park buildings.
- (f) SUNSET.—
 - (1) IN GENERAL.—The authority to enter into and carry out an agreement with the Foundation pursuant to this Act shall sunset on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.
 - (2) EFFECT ON EXISTING AGREEMENT.—Any existing agreement entered into under this section shall terminate, notwithstanding any terms within such agreement, on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.
- (g) SAVING CLAUSE.—Nothing in this Act affects any other authority of the Secretary to issue special use permits or agreements.
- (h) Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report evaluating the implementation of this Act, including the—
 - (1) operational impacts of the agreement on visitor access, security, staffing, and facilities management; and
 - (2) financial implications of the agreement, including fees collected and costs recovered.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 5254 is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Gateway Arch National Park is Missouri's most visited landmark, drawing over 2.4 million visitors annually.¹ The Gateway Arch Park Foundation (Foundation) plays a central role in maintaining and enhancing the park's grounds and surrounding areas in St. Louis. Recently, the Foundation completed a \$380 million public-private partnership, known as the CityArchRiver Project, which reconnected downtown St. Louis to its riverfront, modernized park facilities, and restored historic buildings.² This project generated nearly \$600 million in economic impact and supported 4,400 jobs.³ Building on that success, the Foundation continued to expand programming and enhance public engagement at the Arch.⁴

Since the completion of the CityArchRiver Project, the Foundation has managed nearly 30 private events in park spaces, doubling the number of events held prior to the project's completion.⁵ Further renovations were scheduled for completion in 2025 to create additional space for accommodating social gatherings, weddings, corporate functions, and other events that showcase St. Louis.⁶ Currently, the National Park Service (NPS) may issue permits for special events at the Arch but lacks clear statutory authority to enter into a formal agreement with the Foundation for recurring private use of park facilities.⁷ This limitation creates uncertainty about the terms and conditions under which private events can be held and how the park can recover costs associated with them.

H.R. 5254, the "Gateway Partnership Act," addresses this gap by creating a pilot project to authorize NPS to enter into a one-time, formal agreement with the Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, including the Arch Visitor Center and the Old Courthouse. Projections show that private events hosted under a formalized partnership could generate up to \$780,000 annually in new revenue for Gateway Arch National Park.⁸ The legislation requires that agreements include terms to protect park resources and ensure consistency with NPS programs, prevent disruptions to public access, and provide liability protections for the federal government. The bill also grants NPS the authority to recover all costs associated with private events, including wear and tear on facilities; administrative, maintenance, utility, and security expenses; and personnel costs. By establishing a clear framework for collaboration, this legislation enables the Foundation to take a formal role in event management and marketing on

¹"Gateway Arch National Park sees 2.4 million visitors in 2023", National Park Service, February 29, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/jeff/learn/news/gateway-arch-national-park-sees-2-4-million-visitors-in-2023.htm>.

²"Legacy", Gateway Arch Park Foundation, <https://www.archpark.org/foundation/legacy>. Sarah Fenske, "CityArchRiver project made \$572M economic impact in 2024, report says", St. Louis Magazine, June 23, 2025, <https://www.stlmag.com/news/cityarchriver-economic-impact/>.

³*Id.*

⁴"Bell, Colleagues Lead Bipartisan Gateway Partnership Act", The Office of Congressman Wesley Bell, September 11, 2025, <https://bell.house.gov/media/press-releases/bell-colleagues-lead-bipartisan-gateway-partnership-act>.

⁵"Senator Schmitt Introduces the Gateway Partnership Act to Spur Economic Opportunities in St. Louis", The Office of Senator Eric Schmitt, September 11, 2025, <https://www.schmitt.senate.gov/media/press-releases/senator-schmitt-introduces-the-gateway-partnership-act-to-spur-economic-opportunities-in-st-louis/>.

⁶*Id.*

⁷36 CFR 2.50, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-36/chapter-I/part-2/section-2.50>.

⁸*Id.*

behalf of the park, expanding opportunities for cultural and civic engagement, while ensuring resources remain protected.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 5254 was introduced on September 10, 2025, by Rep. Wesley Bell (D–MO). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands. On December 2, 2025, the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on the bill. On January 22, 2026, the Committee on Natural Resources met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on Federal Lands was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5254 by unanimous consent. Rep. Joe Neguse (D–CO) offered an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute designated Neguse #1 ANS revised. The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute was agreed to by unanimous consent. The bill, as amended, was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held on December 2, 2025.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 names the legislation the “Gateway Partnership Act.”

Section 2. Definitions

Section 2 defines the key terms in the legislation.

Section 3. Gateway Arch National Park partner agreement pilot project

Section 3 establishes a pilot project that authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a one-time agreement with the Foundation to host private events at the Gateway Arch National Park for a period not to exceed five years. The agreement entered into under this section must include terms and conditions regarding event scheduling; limits on the number of events per month; appropriate NPS staffing to ensure public safety and resource protection; liability insurance and a waiver of federal liability; a provision allowing for modification or cancellation of the terms of the agreement; and any other conditions the Secretary deems appropriate.

Section 3 stipulates that private events must be consistent with the park’s purposes and compatible with NPS programs and may not degrade park resources, alter its appearance, or disrupt public access. This section also mandates that the Secretary charge a fee to cover wear and tear from private events and authorizes recovery of all associated costs, including maintenance, utilities, security, administrative and personnel expenses.

Additionally, this section clarifies that nothing in the bill restricts NPS from hosting its own events or issuing permits to other individuals or groups for special events in the park or park buildings. Section 3 also requires the Secretary to submit a report evalu-

ating the bill's implementation to Congress within four years. Finally, Section 3 sunsets seven years after the date of enactment of the bill.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of House rule XIII and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of House rule XIII and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a budgetary analysis and a cost estimate of this bill.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, and for other purposes.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

An estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee, if such estimate is not publicly available on the Congressional Budget Office website.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169) as relating to other programs.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

As ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources, H.R. 5254 would make no changes in existing law.

