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# **Congress of the United States**

**House of Representatives**

**Washington, DC 20515-1501**

**Statement of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton on  
H.R. 5882, Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2013  
Committee on Rules  
June 6, 2012**

My amendment would permit commercial filming and photography from areas with views of the Capitol that are under the jurisdiction of the Capitol Police in addition to Union Square, located directly west of the Capitol. I am gratified that H.R. 5882 permits commercial filming and photography in Union Square, as was the case for many decades before the transfer of jurisdiction of Union Square from the National Park Service (NPS) to the Architect of the Capitol in the fiscal year 2012 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill (P.L. 112-74). I appreciate that the Capitol Police Board has kept in place the prior policy pending passage of the appropriate legislation.

However, the transfer of jurisdiction provides a ripe opportunity to update the current filming and photography policy of an era before the emergence of today's techniques of filmmaking and photography. Because permitting by the Capitol Police would be required, there does not appear to be blanket policy or security reasons for limiting commercial filming and photography to only Union Square.

I ask that the Capitol Police be given discretion to allow commercial filming and photography at additional areas near the Capitol and congressional office buildings, such as the view from Independence Avenue on the House side, and from Constitution Avenue on the Senate side.

Specifically, my amendment would enable the Capitol Police to issue a permit authorizing a person to engage in commercial activity: on any parcel of Federal property under the control of the Capitol Police with views of the Capitol, under the same conditions as those in Union Square.

In reaching my conclusions supporting this amendment, I have held several comprehensive meetings separately with the Architect of the Capitol, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, the House Deputy Sergeant at Arms, the Capitol Police Chief, the heads of the National Park Service and the Trust for the National Mall, and District of Columbia government officials. The District has an office of Motion Picture and Television Development, which coordinates commercial filming in the city. However, many films involving the nation's capital are made in cities such as Baltimore because of restrictive federal policies here.

Vistas of the U.S. Capitol are among America's most iconic. Limiting commercial filming and photography of the Capitol, an important vehicle for telling the nation's story, does not serve the American people. Indeed, most of the world's people know our country and revere our system of government largely through commercial photography and films of the Capitol, which symbolizes our democracy at work. Commercial films and photographs of the Capitol, the seat of our democracy, are perhaps the best modern vehicles for telling the nation's story and showcasing its democratic system of government. My amendment would enable appropriate, vetted commercial filming and photography of the Capitol, and would create economic benefits for the nation, the city, and private business. I urge that my amendment be made in order.