



February 25, 2016

The Honorable Martha McSally  
United States House of Representatives  
1029 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Davis  
United States House of Representatives  
1214 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McSally and Congresswoman Davis:

I am writing today to express the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association's (AOPA) strong support for your bipartisan legislation, the Women Airforce Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act (HR 4336). AOPA is the largest, most influential general aviation association in the world.

As you know, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) is the civilian unit the U.S. government started in 1939 to train women to fly, and free up male pilots for combat during World War II. These women paid their own way to go into training and every single trainee had to already have a pilot's license to enter the WASP program.

On the home front, WASPs flew 60 million miles from 120 bases, testing aircraft fresh off the assembly line, transporting cargo, and towing gunnery targets. Of 25,000 women who applied, 1,900 were accepted, 1,078 received their civilian licenses, and 38 died during their service.

The WASP program ran from 1942 to 1944 however, WASPs were never awarded full military status until Congress passed a law thirty years later in 1977 that retroactively granted WASP pilots active duty status for the purposes of all laws by the Veterans' Administration. In 2002, the U.S. Army which runs Arlington National Cemetery approved active duty designees including WASP pilots for military honors and inurnments at Arlington National Cemetery but the Secretary of the Army reversed this decision in 2015.



AOPA fully supports HR 4336 and urges the House to pass this important legislation. These pioneers who serve as role models for today's female pilots dedicated their service to our country during World War II and should be allowed inurnment at Arlington National Cemetery just as they are at other national cemeteries throughout the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark R. Baker', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Mark R. Baker  
President

cc: Honorable Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House  
Honorable Kevin McCarthy, House Majority Leader  
Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader  
Honorable Steny Hoyer, House Minority Whip  
Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman, Veterans Affairs Committee  
Honorable Corrine Brown, Ranking Member, Veterans Affairs Committee  
Honorable Mac Thornberry, Chairman, Armed Services Committee  
Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee