

Bipartisan Bill Would Place Thomas Paine Memorial Among America's Most Honored Founders in Washington, D.C.

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15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than

two centuries after Thomas Paine helped ignite the movement for American independence, Congress has taken an important step toward giving him the national recognition many historians believe he has long deserved.

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As America celebrates its 250th anniversary, there is no better time to honor the writer whose words helped ignite the fight for independence.”

TPMA President Margaret Downey

The Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA) welcomes the introduction of the Common Sense 250 Act of 2026 (H.R. 9600), bipartisan legislation sponsored by Congressman Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08) and Congresswoman Victoria Spartz (R-IN-05). If enacted, the bill would authorize a memorial honoring Thomas Paine in Area I of Washington, D.C.'s monumental core—an honor reserved for individuals whose contributions to the United States are of "preeminent and lasting historical significance."

The legislation arrives as the nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of both American independence and the publication of "Common Sense," the influential pamphlet that transformed colonial debate into a movement for independence.

Born in England, Paine arrived in America in 1774 carrying little more than a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin. Within months, he had become one of the Revolution's most influential voices. Published in January 1776, "Common Sense" became the bestselling political work of the eighteenth century, persuading thousands of colonists that complete independence was both necessary and achievable.

Paine never sought to profit from his revolutionary writing. He declined royalties from "Common Sense," surrendered its copyright so it could be freely reprinted, and donated his earnings to support the Continental Army. He also served alongside General George Washington's troops and wrote The American Crisis, whose stirring words inspired soldiers during some of the darkest moments of the Revolutionary War.

His influence extended well beyond independence. Paine condemned slavery decades before abolition became a national movement, advocated universal education, defended religious liberty, promoted democratic government, argued for social welfare programs, and popularized the phrase "United States of America."

Congressman Jamie Raskin emphasized the significance of the legislation, saying, "On the 250th anniversary of the publication of 'Common Sense,' our legislation finally brings the great Tom Paine from the attics and libraries of history to a place of shining prominence on our National Mall, establishing the dazzling national memorial he deserves."

Congresswoman Victoria Spartz connected the proposal to the nation's anniversary celebration. "As we celebrate America's 250th anniversary, we remember Thomas Paine's timeless words, 'These are the times that try men's souls,' important words that helped rally General Washington's army. Their sacrifices should remind us of the price so many Americans paid to secure our freedom—a precious gift we have a solemn duty to preserve for future generations."

TPMA leaders described the legislation as the culmination of decades of work by supporters across the United States and abroad. Vice President Robyn Blumner said, "Thomas Paine's writings transformed scattered resistance into a movement for independence. His ideas helped create the United States, and his influence continues to shape democratic societies around the world. A memorial worthy of his legacy belongs in our nation's most distinguished commemorative landscape."

TPMA Secretary Annie Laurie Gaylor added, "Without Thomas Paine, the United States would not be celebrating its 250th anniversary. No tribute to this milestone would be more fitting than ensuring that Paine's long-overdue memorial stands prominently near the Capitol and National Mall, where his life, words, and vision can inspire millions of visitors."

TPMA Treasurer Diane Straka called the bill the result of decades of dedication. "This legislation brings our vision significantly closer to reality," she said. "We remain steadfast in our commitment to honoring Thomas Paine and to ensuring that every contribution entrusted to us



Pictured is sculptor Zenos Frudakis at this Glenside, Pennsylvania studio working on the Thomas Paine statue.

advances our mission with transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship."

If Congress approves the legislation, supporters will have up to seven years to raise funds, finalize the memorial's design, secure federal approvals, and construct the monument on an approved Area I site. TPMA has already enlisted internationally acclaimed sculptor Zenos Frudakis to create a befitting memorial. Reflecting on the project, Frudakis said, "As a sculptor, there are few honors greater than being entrusted with preserving the memory of someone who helped change the course of history. My goal is to create a Thomas Paine who speaks not only to his own time, but to every generation that believes in freedom, reason, and the power of ideas."

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