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Dear Mr. President, Chairmen, and Mr. Mayor:

On March 28, 2019, I wrote on behalf of the Grant Monument Association (GMA) to the President and the chairs at the time of your respective committees, as well as to the Mayor of New York, regarding maintenance and operational deficiencies at Grant's Tomb (officially the General Grant National Memorial) and to urge remedial action. Seven years later, the requested remedial action has not been taken. Even worse, those problems have been compounded by further deterioration and additional conditions that are even more severe.

Back in 2019, I reported visible discoloration and peeling from water damage at the cupola/roof level, damage that extended to the ceilings above the reliquary rooms. In the intervening years, water damage has greatly increased, with discoloration and falling plaster far worse. See Exhibit A. By delaying repairs to the visibly deteriorating areas and to the underlying damage to the roof, the government has allowed the site to become even more compromised and requiring more funds for repair than otherwise would have been necessary.

That and more extensive disrepair were recently documented by a former employee of the National Park Service (NPS) in a document annexed here as Exhibit B. The conditions reported in this document include the following:

- On the southwest corner of the Tomb, in the section past the door from the main level to the spiral stairway, the only way to reach the upper level of the Tomb (an area closed to the public but that must be accessed by NPS employees):
  - The door is “peeling with lead positive paint.”
  - The walls along the stairwell “are crumbling with positive lead and possible asbestos.”

- “Mold is visible on your right hand side at the top of the stairwell, plaster is falling in chunks, windows are broken disturbing the particles and pushing them onto the people below while collecting on the rim of the overlook at the public level.”
- “Loose debris from above regularly swirls in the air and settles on surfaces below.”
- A slop sink inside the mausoleum that was supposed to supply potable water has a non-functioning filter “surrounded by chemicals and lead residue,” and a slop sink across the street at the visitor center beneath the overlook is also “suspected to contain lead.”
- In the visitor center, “[t]he water is yellow and can be seen staining the fixtures or bottled from the closet sink” used by employees. The public restrooms have signs not to drink the water, and water fountains and coolers once provided by management have been removed.
- The lack of “working AC, heat, or industrial air filtration” inside the Tomb: In the winter, this translates to temperatures that “drop to below freezing in the mausoleum and usually feels colder than outside.”

The NPS employee who compiled this information, while obviously familiar with the site, was not a member of the staff at Grant’s Tomb, but a lead ranger at another national park. Upon disclosing the details above, I am informed, this employee was reassigned in a non-lead capacity to another park—one this employee reported as having its own safety hazards for employees—and resigned shortly thereafter. My understanding is that this apparent retaliation did not occur at the hands of current management of the Manhattan Sites Unit (of which Grant’s Tomb is a part), which at the moment is led by an acting superintendent. Writing as a former NPS employee and (at other times) volunteer who faced retaliation for reporting the disrepair of Grant’s Tomb during the 1990s, it is particularly troubling that this would happen all these years later at the hands of the agency charged with the protection of both its parks and its employees’ health. David Fitzpatrick, the secretary and treasurer of the American Federation of Government Employees Council 270, recently filed a complaint with OSHA reporting all the unsafe conditions for employees at Grant’s Tomb noted above. Yet when OSHA replied on April 17, it mentioned only one specific issue—it cited an NPS assessment showing “no water contamination issues and that the water at the site is potable”—and rebutted none of the other allegations.

The disrepair at the site extends beyond this. I reported back in 2019 that the broken, cracked outdoor plaza surrounding the Tomb was in need of repair, and the NPS had acknowledged in its Project Management Information System (PMIS) proposal that that area “has become so deteriorated it has become a safety hazard.” The granite that constitutes the Tomb’s steps and adjoining south plaza, including the two stairways that lead to the sidewalks, also showed some wear. The broken bluestone pavers needed to be repointed and in many instances replaced, as did the granite pavers in similar condition. Seven years later, these repairs have not been made.

In fact, with the exception of a proposal to authorize the posthumous promotion of Grant to the rank of General of the Armies of the United States for his bicentennial in 2022, I believe none of the appropriations and authorizing legislation requested in 2019 has come to fruition. I therefore reiterate (with minor modifications) the following requests:

Appropriations measures:

- Increase security at the site with a minimum of two guards, preferably drawn from the U.S. Army\* or alternatively the U.S. Park Police, at all times, and the installation of security cameras.

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\* The 2019 report recommended U.S. Park Police. However, in view of the unique place held by General Grant in the history of the Army, not to mention budgetary savings, I renew an earlier GMA proposal to have honor guards supplied by the Army on a 24-hour basis. Section 6 of H.R. 4393, a bipartisan bill introduced in the 103rd Congress, provided for three Army guards to protect the monument on a 24-hour basis.

- Repair the discoloration and peeling from water damage at the cupola/roof level and reliquary room ceilings, along with any associated waterproofing deficiencies, and establish ongoing monitoring to prevent further damage.
- Remedy the discoloration of the marble floor surrounding the sarcophagi of Ulysses and Julia Grant following sound preservation standards.
- Repair the broken, cracked outdoor plaza surrounding the Tomb, including repointing and, where necessary, replacement of bluestone pavers, granite pavers, the monument's steps, and the adjoining south plaza and two stairways.
- Ongoing maintenance of the stone plaza and stairway north of the Tomb, as well as repair or replacement of the black fence surrounding the temporary tomb site and restoration and maintenance of the landscape.
- Installation of enhanced outdoor lighting to properly illuminate the monument at night.
- Complete the monument with a crowning finial for the summit of the building and an equestrian statue of Grant in the front plaza.
- Expand the open hours of the site to seven days a week throughout the year and ensure that staffing is adequate to provide public access to the Tomb proper during all open hours.
- Digitize and make accessible to the public all items in the NPS's General Grant National Memorial archives. Update the archival catalog for accuracy, comprehensiveness, and optimal online access.

Authorizing measures:

- Redesignate the monument as Grant's Tomb National Monument.
- Expand the park boundaries to include the overlook pavilion and roughly the southern half of the "island" of land on which Grant's Tomb sits enclosed by the northbound and southbound lanes of Riverside Drive, from the area behind the north plaza's temporary tomb memorial area to the stone plaza extending south from the entrance of the monument. (This proposal is illustrated in Exhibits M and N of the 2019 report.)
- Authorize the creation of an expanded visitor center with space for improved, interactive exhibits, along with expanded restroom facilities and access to both the visitor center and the Tomb for persons with disabilities.
- Authorize a commemorative coin marking the posthumous promotion of General Grant to General of the Armies of the United States,<sup>†</sup> the proceeds of which shall help fund maintenance and operations at the site.

I direct your attention to the 2019 report in its entirety, accessible at <https://bit.ly/4tYOUg9>, for further background, including exhibits, detailing the necessity and logistics of these proposals.

What is the holdup? The pandemic can no longer be cited as an excuse for inaction. And inaction plagues the site on the most granular level. Take two examples. The failure of the heating system in Grant's Tomb led to its closure to the public between December 5, 2024 and February 13, 2025, with very limited public access for some time after that. When I approached the NPS this past winter to plan a 200th birthday ceremony for former first lady Julia Dent Grant on January 26, 2026, I was surprised to hear that the heating system was not yet fixed. When I learned the cost of restoring the heat was approximately \$5,600, the GMA offered to pay for the repair, provided that we could be assured it would be done in time for the ceremony. That assurance for a modest repair was not given, so the offer was declined. The NPS limited the ceremony to 30 minutes inside the Tomb because of the cold—with most speakers, including Rep. Adriano Espaillat having to wear coats—after which the event continued in the well-heated visitor center.

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<sup>†</sup> The 2019 report set the 200th anniversary of General Grant's birth as the theme of this coin, but at this point, the GMA proposes that his posthumous promotion, processed in 2024, would be the most fitting theme.

There is also extreme budgetary parsimony that includes a \$1 purchase card limit for the kinds of routine disbursements that fuel site operations. That translated into the GMA offering to cover the travel expenses of outside (non-GMA, non-government) speakers in order for them to conduct basic site events such as President Grant's birthday and the anniversary of his death. Also, because the site is no longer open Mondays and Tuesdays, the GMA has had to apply for permits for this year's Monday birth anniversaries of both Mrs. Grant and President Grant—including our financial coverage of ranger hours on those days. The current Wednesday to Sunday hours, incidentally, are limited to six or seven hours a day, depending on the season, which is even less open time than during the dark days of desecration at the monument during the early 1990s.

To be clear, the GMA is here to help as our limited resources permit; that is our mission. We also do not blame the dedicated rangers on the staff of Grant's Tomb, who are making commendable efforts under difficult conditions. (Speaking of which, it would go a long way toward solving the long-term problem of retaining personnel in the Manhattan Sites Unit given New York's high cost of living to offer all employees housing on Governors Island or the Gateway National Recreation Area, where a few senior NPS employees have resided.) What is dismaying is to see how diminished the federal government's commitment is to the site, from the rigid and unresponsive NPS regional bureaucracy up to the absence of adequate congressional appropriations—a problem that has persisted regardless of which party is in control. More than dismaying, this state of affairs violates the NPS's obligation under 54 U.S.C. § 100101 “to conserve the scenery, natural and historic objects” in our national parks and to “leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

In the year of America's 250th birthday, this state of affairs is particularly disgraceful at the final resting place of a hero responsible for the U.S.A.'s very survival—not to mention the Centennial president, a leader who helped ensure a new era of peace and equality for all Americans. It is well past time for the government that just gave the hero of Appomattox a military promotion to bring Grant's Tomb back up to standard.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frank Scaturro  
President  
Grant Monument Association

cc: Hon. Charles Schumer, U.S. Senate, New York  
Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senate, New York  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, 13th Congressional District, New York  
Hon. Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior  
Jessica Bowron, Director, National Park Service  
Amy Sebring, Acting Superintendent, Manhattan Sites  
Hon. Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York  
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Shaun Abreu, Majority Leader and New York City Council District 7  
Tricia Shimamura, Commissioner, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation  
John Herrold, Riverside Park Administrator  
Ulysses S. Grant Association  
National Parks Conservation Association

## Exhibit A

Water damage with visible discoloration, fallen plaster, and peeling paint in the cupola/roof level

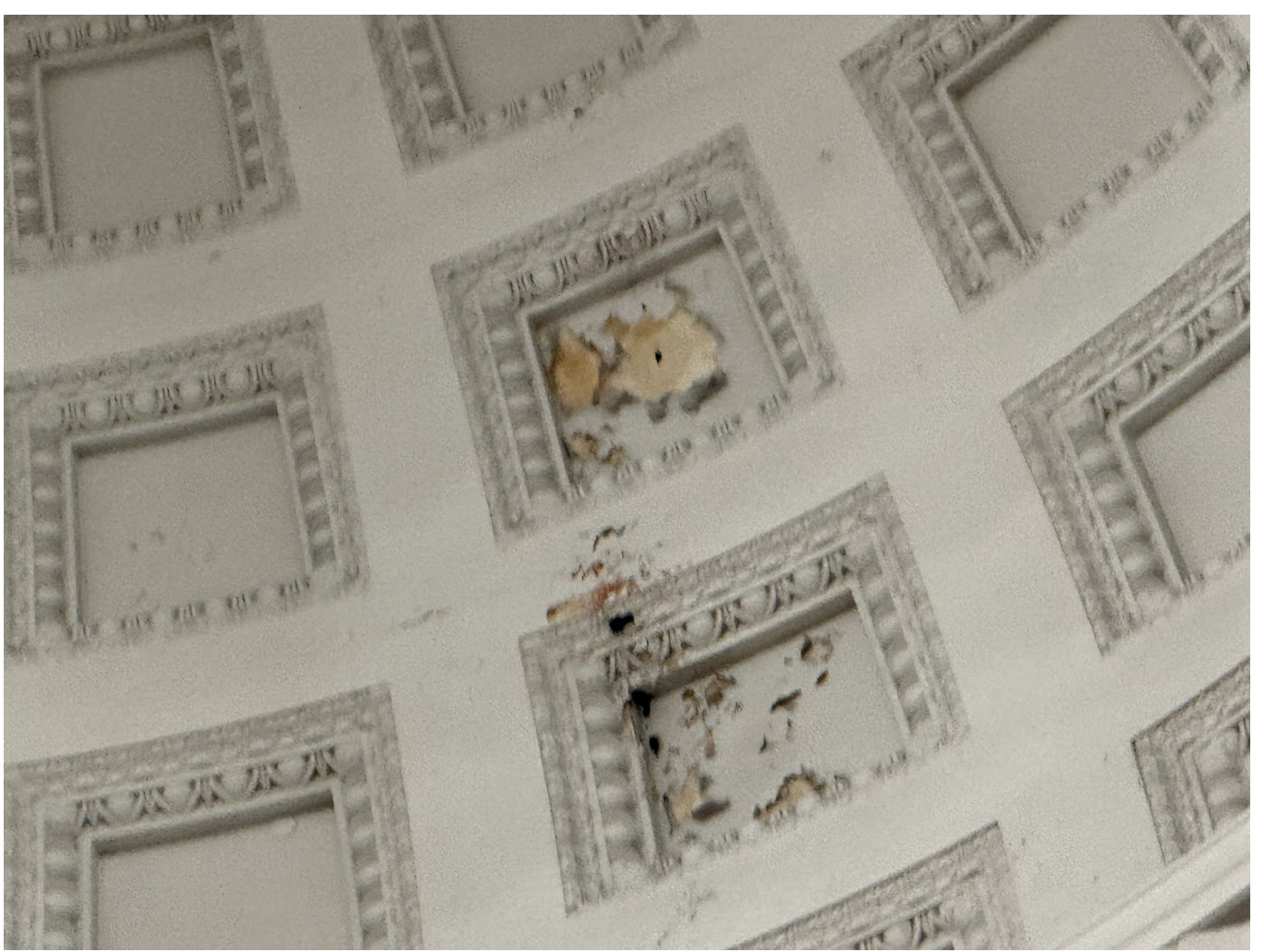












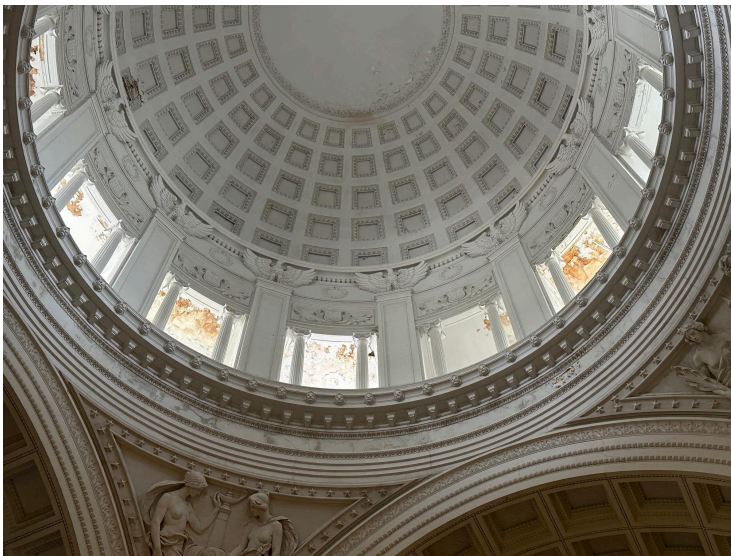


## Exhibit B

Report prepared by former National Park Service employee  
**General Grant National Memorial: 122nd & Riverside Dr. New York, NY 10027**



To enter the mausoleum you must scale the steps—there is no ADA entrance. Many visitors arrive out of breath requesting accommodations for when it's time to return down the stairs.



Once through the door, the only other exit is up. The mold smell is immediately noticeable. There is currently no working AC, heat, or industrial air filtration. In front of you is a rotunda: the coffins of Julia and Ulysses S. Grant can be viewed below from this vantage point or via the stairs at the back of the tomb. Looking up you will see substantial water damage that has been promised funds to correct at some time in the future but the date keeps getting pushed back. Loose debris from above regularly swirls in the air and settles on surfaces below. Visitors have even flagged this damage through the SO 3431 public comment form that states:

(Name of property) belongs to the American people, and (name of land management

Bureau) wants your feedback. Please let us know if you have identified (1) any areas of the (park/area, etc. as appropriate) that need repair; (2) any services that need improvement; or (3) any signs or other information that are negative about either past or living Americans or that fail to emphasize the beauty, grandeur, and abundance of landscapes and other natural features.

Date Formatted	Topic	Park Code ↑	Comment	Status
06/21/25	Areas that need repair	GEGR	Oppose the proposed demolition of the Saratoga House; urge the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic structure.	
08/03/25	Areas that need repair	GEGR	Please repair the water soaked and peeling plaster on the ceiling of Grant's tomb and memorial in Riverside, NY. It is not be fitting of a presidential tomb or of the United States' regard for its past presidents. Thank you.	Park
06/20/25	Services that need improvement	GEGR	This park needs more money to cover staffing. We visited Hamilton Grange and GEGR and the staff was running back and forth to cover instead of being able to 100% dedicate their time to the visitors on site	Park

In the winter temperatures drop to below freezing in the mausoleum and usually feels colder than outside. At one point gas was leaking into a back room but not providing heat because a mechanism is broken in the equipment. ConEd turned off the gas but has not repaired the line.



To your left is a ranger desk. Walk past the desk to a door closed to the public also on the left that is peeling with lead positive paint. Inside are light switches used daily by staff and a slop sink that employees are instructed to drink if they want potable water provided by the workplace. A filter was added that does not function and is surrounded by chemicals and lead residue.



The stairwell here is the only one that goes up to the dome: the walls are crumbling with positive lead and possible asbestos. In recent years we have used this stairwell to access storage for

tents, uniforms, and other operational items. They've since been moved, but we've never been expressly told not to use the stairwell. The rest of the photos are from above: closed to the public but an open and active airspace.



Mold is visible on your right hand side at the top of the stairwell, plaster is falling in chunks, windows are broken disturbing the particles and pushing them onto the people below while collecting on the rim of the overlook at the public level. Previous rangers have described how lead has been abated twice before at this location. As recently as April 2024, former National Park Service Director Chuck Sams inspected the memorial with Manhattan Sites management including Superintendent Shirley McKinney, Chief of Facilities Jeff Marrasso, and Supervisor Callie Tominsky (pictured on the first page of this report).





Across the street there is a small structure with stairs and a ramp to the Visitor Center.



The slop sink here is also offered for drinking water although it is suspected to contain lead. Interestingly, the restrooms have signs not to drink that water, but these pipes are newer from the building's remodel years ago and do not immediately test positive for lead.



**Summary of Acquisition Reference**

Generally, bottled water may not be purchased with government funds. The purchase of bottled water is allowable if a source of potable water is not readily available (i.e., not available because of location, contamination, or otherwise not fit for consumption). Parks and offices should consider the use of portable water coolers and refillable water bottles/hydration packs when determining if the purchase of bottled water is necessary. Further, if water source contamination is suspected, the park should contact their regional public health consultant. Personal preference or taste are not a valid exceptions. The agency can determine how to best provide employees with drinking water, including with coolers or water jugs. Prior to purchasing any bottled water, cardholders should consult with charge card A/OPC, supervisor/manager and Budget personnel. Any bottled water purchase should be well-documented.



The water is yellow and can be seen staining the fixtures or bottled from the closet sink. Although management once provided water fountains and coolers, they have since been removed. They claim someone above them refuses to acknowledge our water is not potable and therefore does not allow water to be purchased despite official guidance to the contrary.

## How the Law Provides for Necessities

The U.S. Department of Labor states that every employer across the country is [required to provide drinking water](#).

Specifically, OSHA regulations report this workplace drinking water must:

- Adhere to public health standards
- Come from a drinking fountain, covered container, or single-use bottle

Employers might ask whether tap water from the restroom is considered a proper water system for workers. However, it's important to note that, unlike a bathroom tap, a drinking fountain is a water outlet that's specifically intended for drinking water only. Thus, a sink or hand basin wouldn't meet the OSHA standard set forth.

### [1910.141\(g\)](#)

#### ***Consumption of food and beverages on the premises*** -

### 1910.141(g)(1)

***Application.*** This paragraph shall apply only where employees are permitted to consume food or beverages, or both, on the premises.

### [1910.141\(g\)\(2\)](#)

***Eating and drinking areas.*** No employee shall be allowed to consume food or beverages in a toilet room nor in any area exposed to a toxic material.

### 1915.88(b)

*Potable water.*

### 1915.88(b)(1)

The employer shall provide potable water for all employee health and personal needs and ensure that only potable water is used for these purposes.

### 1915.88(b)(2)

The employer shall provide potable drinking water in amounts that are adequate to meet the health and personal needs of each employee.

### 1915.88(b)(3)

The employer shall dispense drinking water from a fountain, a covered container with single-use drinking cups stored in a sanitary receptacle, or single-use bottles. The employer shall prohibit the use of shared drinking cups, dippers, and water bottles.

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT: UPPER WEST SIDE

# NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT: UPPER WEST SIDE; An Uncivil War Over the Keeping of Grant's Tomb

By Emily M. Bernstein  
Dec. 19, 1993

He was a volunteer for two and half years and was employed as ranger for two summers. In that time, he says, he wrote memo after memo about the memorial's condition, and he met or spoke with all his superiors, including some at the Park Service's regional office.

Frustrated by the lack of action his complaints produced, he wrote the hefty report and sent it this fall to officials in the Department of the Interior, which oversees the Park Service. He also sent the report to members of Congress and to President Clinton.

But the Park Service said the first time it heard of the report was last month, after WNBC-TV broadcast a story about the neglect of the tomb. That day, Mr. Scaturro was dismissed as a volunteer.

Joseph Avery, the superintendent of Manhattan sites for the Park Service, said that while the report's accusations of misuse of funds and theft of property were unfounded, some criticisms were reasonable.

"Some of it is garbage, and some of it identifies accurately the conditions at the site," Mr. Avery said. "We have not put the kind of funds into that facility that we should. We are under budget constraints, but we still need to pay more attention to it." Mr. Avery said Mr. Scaturro was dismissed because he did not go through proper channels to lodge his complaints.

## COLUMBIA

of reconstruction, Grant's contributions were newly appreciated.

While a student, Scaturro urged the Park Service to address the shabbiness of the national monument dedicated to the eighteenth president. He sent memos to his supervisors but got nowhere. Finally, he wrote a blistering report and sent it to everyone from President Bill Clinton and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt on down. In November 1993, after the local news reported on Scaturro's campaign, the Park Service relieved him of his volunteer duties.

Scaturro fought on. He revived the [Grant Monument Association](#), the group that built the edifice, and invited Grant's descendants onto the board. Then, on January 2, 1994, the day Scaturro's father died, the *New York Times* published an editorial titled "[Dishonor for a Hero President](#)," which hailed Scaturro's efforts. That same year, the association prepared a lawsuit to compel the US to restore the site, and a New York congressional delegation led by Representative Jerrold Nadler '69CC, whose district included the monument, pushed for appropriations.

All of this spurred Congress to find the money. Security at the monument was beefed up, the structure was cleaned, and the plaza was replaced, all in time for the tomb's centennial in 1997.

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This spring marks 125 years since the tomb was unveiled, an anniversary that coincides with the bicentennial of Grant's birth. Scaturro, now a lawyer, is working with the US Military Academy at West Point to organize events at the