



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo and Buttenschon: National Parks Service should take full control of Oriskany Battlefield and Steuben Memorial

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 6, 2019



On the 242nd anniversary of the Battle of Oriskany, New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, and Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Marcy, announced that they have sent a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo asking him to consider granting the National Parks Service full control of the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and the Steuben Memorial State Historic Site.

“It is our belief that granting full control of the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and the Steuben Memorial State Historic Site to the National Park Service would be in New York State’s best interest,” Deputy Minority Leader Griffo and Assemblywoman Buttenschon wrote in their letter. “Doing so will potentially save the state money, put several of the Mohawk Valley’s Revolutionary War sites under one umbrella and ensure that the battlefield remains open for generations of visitors.”

The full text of Deputy Minority Leader Griffo and Assemblywoman Buttenschon’s letter is below:

Andrew Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Gov. Cuomo:

As elected officials, we must continuously seek out ways to make our state better for all New Yorkers. It is equally imperative that we examine, consider and study all of the options available to rein in spending and improve the financial standing of New York State.

One such option that we believe requires further consideration is the status of the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site in Oriskany and the Steuben Memorial State Historic Site in Remsen. Both sites attract visitors from around the world and are symbols of the important role that the Mohawk Valley played in the Revolutionary War.

The National Park Service, which oversees the Fort Stanwix National Monument in Rome, has expressed interest in taking over the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and the Steuben Memorial State Historic Site. According to the 2009 Fort Stanwix National

Monument Final General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, the park service initiated a study in 2001 at the direction of Congress that examined the possibility of incorporating the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site into the national park system. The study did not find it feasible at the time to include it in the national park system because of New York State's interest in continuing to manage the battlefield site. Instead, the National Park Service concluded that it should seek to develop an enhanced cooperative partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

In 2008, the National Park Service and New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation entered into a five year cooperative management agreement for the battlefield and the Steuben Memorial. Another agreement was reached in 2013. These arrangements have helped to provide for important maintenance and staffing at both locations, additional educational opportunities and an enhanced experience for visitors. They also have cost New York State more than \$300,000 since the contract started May 2008 and ended July 2018.

The most recent agreement between the two entities was authorized in 2018 and continues until 2023. This current agreement is unfunded and serves as an administrative tool to keep the relationship between the National Park Service and New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation intact. During this time, the National Park Service is assisting the state with various functions at both sites.

It is our belief that granting full control of the Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site and the Steuben Memorial State Historic Site to the National Park Service would be in New York State's best interest. Doing so will potentially save the state money, put several of the Mohawk Valley's Revolutionary War sites under one umbrella and ensure that the battlefield remains open for generations of visitors.

Thank you very much for your interest in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

State Senate, 47th District

Marianne Buttenschon

State Assembly, 119th District

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