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Comments: As an avid outdoors enthusiast and climber, I find it concerning that there is currently legislation being drafted that could severely damage the climbing community. The climbing community relies on fixed anchors to remain safe, and maintenance of these anchors is absolutely essential to avoid accidents. When one climbs, you trust your gear with your life. Often, the only pieces of climbing gear a climber doesn't bring with themselves is fixed anchors. It would become very dangerous to climb if fixed anchors couldn't be replaced or maintained, and many people would die from accidents because of this. It's also unreasonable to restrict anchors now, as for decades, federal agencies like the NPS has allowed, managed, and authorized the placement of fixed anchors.

I have found great comfort in the outdoors, growing up in the Pacific Northwest. I discovered climbing as an excellent way to spend time outdoors with friends after spending so long indoors during Covid-19 lockdowns. Many others have as well, climbing is enjoying a huge increase across the US at the moment, with gyms being established in cities across the country, and National Parks such as Yosemite and Joshua Tree seeing huge numbers of climbers every year. If fixed anchors were no longer allowed to be maintained or replaced, climbing will become less accessible, as removable climbing gear is very expensive and inherently more dangerous than the use of fixed anchors. I would not have started climbing outdoors if I had been required to use removable gear, and I personally know many others in the climbing community feel the same.

The U.S. National Park Service Director's Order #41, section 7.2 states that "climbing is a legitimate and appropriate use of wilderness." It also says "The occasional placement of a fixed anchor for belay, rappel, or protection purposes does not necessarily impair the future enjoyment of wilderness or violate the Wilderness Act", and "The establishment of bolt-intensive face climbs is considered incompatible with wilderness preservation and management due to the concentration of human activity which they support, and the types and levels of impacts associated with such routes." In my experience, rock climbers have a significantly lower environmental impact than many other visitors in the wilderness. The vast majority of climbers have other outdoor interests along with climbing, and have an awareness of their impact and the principals of Leave No Trace. In every park I've visited, the greatest environmental impact I've observed has been on walking trails and attractions, where the concentration of visitors is highest. Tourist attractions such as Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone and Delicate Arch in Arches attract many more people than climbing areas, and are visited by tourists who often have little experience outdoors and have no sense of their impact.