

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 1:54:33 AM

First name: Adrea

Last name: Richmond

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Adrea Richmond and this is my formal opinion on why our Nation's rock climbing policies shouldn't change and why prohibitions would negatively impact our wilderness areas, forests, and parks.

I worked as a professional climbing guide for 7 years in Tucson, AZ. In addition to that I was a technical rope rescue person for the Pima County Sheriff's Office search and rescue unit for 4.5 years. I have been an avid steward to our environment and mentor to my community and all of this stemmed because I started recreational rock climbing in 2010.

Again because of rock climbing, I have saved taxpayer's money. If I weren't available to volunteer to climb up a tower on Mt. Lemmon Highway, like we do in Yosemite, the deputies would have had to request a black hawk helicopter and short-haul our subject out to safety. I used my rock climbing skills and expertise to aid in a swift and successful operation. During my time volunteering with the Pima County Sheriff's Department I was deployed into the field solely because of my rock climbing skills and experience. I have saved a lot of lives by using the fixed hardware rock climbers purchased, placed, and maintain.

Rock climbing gave me a living and allowed me to support my family for 7 years. I could not have accomplished and shared this healthy lifestyle without the use of the fixed hardware and the policies that are currently in place. There are other people just like me and by passing this bill you put American's lives and livelihoods at stake.

Since the creation of fixed hardware, rock climbing safety has increased tenfold on an international scale. The use of shared information on rock climbing specific internet platforms has allowed us to research different climbing routes and know what to expect during our expedition, traveling to these destinations, and how to excel in stewardship while we are in these sacred parks and areas. If fixed hardware is to be prevented from being updated, it will have detrimental effects on our safety. The hardware that has been fixed into these climbing routes are crucial for a safe expedition. We need to be able to update and maintain these hardwares.

If the proposed bills are passed it won't keep rock climbers off of the rock. Instead it will induce an influx of dangerous situations for climbers and rescuers. It will cause us to leave ugly webbing behind, and strain the good standing relationship we climbers have with the National Parks Service and National Forest Service.

We climbers pride ourselves in conservation and safety. We have numerous non-profit climbing organizations that work diligently with the public to keep the fixed hardware up to date, redundant, and camouflaged. Rock climbers spend thousands of hours volunteering for trail conservation and public education as well. We have really come together on a national scale to address conservation issues and what we can do to help our lands. These proposed policies would strain this relationship and deter volunteers and good stewardship.

The bills that are being proposed would negatively impact a prospering economy too. I was able to pay my bills with the money I made from rock climbing guiding. There are thousands of towns, restaurants, and other small businesses that rely on the annual visit of rock climbers. Most climbers travel to places solely to climb. The major cities that are near our National Parks, wilderness areas, and National Forests benefit from the annual passage of climbers. Grocery stores, restaurants, retail shops, car mechanics, and even doctor visits to name a few would be impacted by the absence of rock climbers. We purchase annual passes to National Parks too, the amount of money made from us would take away from that source of revenue for our country.

Please don't pass these bills. Rock climbing is such an important activity to me and my family. I need to be safe when I climb.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully yours,  
Adrea Richmond  
Tucson, AZ