



Susan Collins

March 29, 2014

Dear Friends:

The people of Maine have a long history of courageously defending our nation's freedom and of gratefully honoring those who give their lives serving that great cause. The Summit Project Fallen Heroes Memorial is inspiring evidence of that proud heritage.

The Summit Project is a living tribute to remember and memorialize the 59 Maine service members who have fallen in the line of duty since September 11, 2001. Major David Cote traveled across Maine to visit with the families and asked each to search for a stone to represent their loved one who gave his or her life so that we could live in peace. From backyards and fishing holes to national forests and lakeside camps, these stones have been hand-picked from across Maine to represent each of these heroes. Major Cote's dedicated service to our country is matched only by his devotion to his fallen comrades.

I commend Major Peter Perzel, Captain William Hague, and the staff of the Maine Military Entrance Processing Station for providing the ideal home for this memorial. As the coming generations of Maine patriots take their oaths of enlistment, they will pick up the torch of freedom that was so faithfully carried by those remembered here.

This tribute will come to life on Memorial Day when hikers carry these stones to the summit of Mt. Katahdin for a service atop Maine's highest peak. Although the stones are heavy, the burden will be eased by the spirit of service and sacrifice each contains.

To the families of our fallen heroes, while no words can compensate for your loss, I pass along these words offered by President Abraham Lincoln to a grieving mother during the Civil War: "I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

Each of the heroes memorialized by the Summit Project has earned the gratitude of our nation. At one of the most challenging times in our history, they chose to serve our country. They went far beyond the call of duty, combining the virtues of courage and sacrifice with compassion for others. Like the stones that represent them, their legacy will be everlasting and indestructible. May God bless these heroes and their families, and may God bless America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Collins".

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

*United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510*