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WASHINGTON – Today, the Delaware Congressional Delegation, Sens. Tom Carper and Chris Coons (both D-Del.) and Rep. John Carney (D-Del.), introduced historic legislation to authorize the creation of a national park in Delaware – the First State National Historical Park Act of 2011.

Currently, the first state to sign the Constitution, the first state in the union, is the last state to have a national park. If the First State National Historical Park Act of 2011 is adopted, that would change. The First State National Historical Park Act of 2011 would create a park celebrating early American Dutch, Swedish and English Settlements located throughout Delaware, and Delaware's role in the events leading up to the founding of our nation. The park will include sites and attractions in each of Delaware's three counties. The legislation also allows the Park Service to work with other historically significant sites that are not included in the National Park, but can be included in the National Park materials, tours and other related items.

“Every year, millions of Americans plan their vacations around one of our nation's most invaluable resource – the national park system. In planning our family's summer vacation years ago, I was shocked to find that Delaware was the only state not to have a national park. The first state to ratify the Constitution, the state in which the Swedes and Dutch first came ashore to America, remains the only state without a national park,” said Sen. Carper. “For almost a decade, I have been working with federal officials, state officials, community leaders and activists to change that. The legislation introduced today celebrates Delaware's rich history and brings us one step closer to making the Delaware National Park a reality. I cannot wait for the day when families all across this country and the world will plan their vacations around the Delaware National Park, to learn how the “Small Wonder” helped launch the most enduring experiment in democracy that the world has ever known – the United States of America.”

"The First State National Historical Park Act is important to Delawareans, who for too long have been the only Americans without a national park to attract tourism and help celebrate the important role Delaware has played in shaping our nation's history," said Sen. Coons. "I was proud to join Senator Carper as a cosponsor of his bill and applaud Rep. Carney for moving this effort forward in the House."

"I'm proud that the first bill I'm introducing as Delaware's Congressman is legislation that would establish a national park in America's first state," said Rep. Carney. "Delaware has a long and distinguished history that helps tell the story of the founding of this great nation. From Fort Christina to Dover Green, our state's character and prestige is indelibly linked to our historic landmarks. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make this vision a reality."

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