To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a memorial to slavery, in the District of Columbia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 2003

Mr. STEARNS (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. QUINN, and Mr. MORAN of Virginia) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a memorial to slavery, in the District of Columbia.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National Slave Memorial Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Millions of Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and the 13 American colonies in the period 1619 through 1865.
(2) The American Colonies determined that economic benefit would be derived from the import of slave labor and forthwith became an active participant in the “Middle Passage” of African slaves to its shores.

(3) Upon their arrival in North America, Africans were considered chattel and thereby denied the privileges granted to other immigrants.

(4) The agricultural resources of any nation are the backbone of its subsistence and for over 250 years, millions of unnamed African and American-born Black men, women, and children provided the free labor that cultivated the fields from which Americans ate and were clothed, which allowed the dominant population to secure other interests.

(5) Slavery was a grave injustice that caused African Americans to suffer enormous damages and losses, both material and intangible, including the loss of human dignity and liberty, the frustration of careers and professional lives, and the long-term loss of income and opportunity.

(6) Slavery in the United States denied African Americans the fruits of their own labor and was an immoral and inhumane deprivation of life, liberty,
the pursuit of happiness, citizenship rights, and cultural heritage.

(7) Although the achievements of African Americans in overcoming the evils of slavery stand as a source of tremendous inspiration, the successes of slaves and their descendants do not overwrite the failure of the Nation to grant all Americans their birthright of equality and the civil rights that safeguard freedom.

(8) Many African American slaves fought as valiant patriots in the wars that helped to preserve our national freedoms, knowing they would never be privileged to partake of the freedoms for which they fought.

(9) African American art, history, and culture reflect experiences of slavery and freedom, and continued struggles for full recognition of citizenship and treatment with human dignity, and there is inadequate presentation, preservation, and recognition of the contributions of African Americans within American society.

(10) There is a great need for building institutions and monuments to promote cultural understanding of African American heritage and further enhance racial harmony.
(11) It is proper and timely for the Congress to recognize June 19, 1865, the historic day when the last group of slaves were informed of their freedom, to acknowledge the historic significance of the abolition of slavery, to express deep regret to African Americans, and to support reconciliation efforts.

SEC. 3. NATIONAL SLAVE MEMORIAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The National Foundation for African American Heritage (in this Act referred to as the “Foundation”), in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, is authorized to establish, in the District of Columbia, a memorial to slavery—

(1) to acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 American Colonies; and

(2) to honor the nameless and forgotten men, women, and children who have gone unrecognized for their undeniable and weighty contribution to the United States.

(b) LOCATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The memorial shall be situated in a location that is—

(A) within the area that is referred to in the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C.
1001 et seq.) as Area 1 and in proximity to the Lincoln Memorial; and

(B) recommended by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Capital Memorial Commission not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) Compliance with Commemorative Works Act.—This Act shall be treated as satisfying the authorization and location approval requirements of section 6 of the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 1006).

c) Design.—The Foundation, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, and the National Capital Memorial Commission shall—

(1) not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, begin soliciting proposals for the design of the memorial from architects; and

(2) not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, select a design for the memorial from the proposals submitted to the Secretary.

d) Funding.—

(1) in general.—The Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with the Director of the Smithsonian Institution, may accept donations of any necessary funds from the Foundation and other private
sector sources to design, construct, and maintain the memorial.

(2) Account in Treasury.—The Secretary shall deposit amounts that are accepted under this subsection into a separate account in the Treasury established for such purpose. Amounts deposited into the account shall be available for expenditure by the Secretary without further appropriation to carry out this Act.

SEC. 4. REPORTS.

(a) Periodic Reports.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and each 6 months thereafter until the submission of a final report under subsection (b), the Secretary of the Interior shall transmit to the Congress a report on activities with regard to the memorial.

(b) Final Report.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall transmit to the Congress a final report on activities with regard to the memorial, including the recommended design of the memorial.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) In General.—Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the
Interior such sums as may be necessary for carrying out this Act.

(b) LIMITATION.—No sums may be appropriated to the Secretary for the construction of the memorial unless at least one-half of the estimated total cost of the construction of the memorial is donated from private sources pursuant to section 3(d).