110TH CONGRESS
2d Session

H. R. 998

AN ACT

To direct the Librarian of Congress and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to carry out a joint project at the Library of Congress and the National Museum of African American History and Culture to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights movement, and for other purposes.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Civil Rights History
Project Act of 2008”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

(1) A fundamental principle of American de-
mocracy is that individuals should stand up for their
rights and beliefs and fight for justice.

(2) The actions of those who participated in the
Civil Rights movement from the 1950’s through the
1960’s are a shining example of this principle in ac-
tion, demonstrated in events as varied as the Mont-
gomery Bus Boycott, the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides,
the March on Washington, the drive for voting
rights in Mississippi, and the March to Selma.

(3) While the Civil Rights movement had many
visible leaders, including Thurgood Marshall, Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks, there
were many others whose impact and experience were
just as important to the cause but who are not as
well known.

(4) The participants in the Civil Rights move-
ment possess an invaluable resource in their first-
hand memories of the movement, and the recording
of the retelling of their stories and memories will
provide a rich, detailed history of our Nation during
an important and tumultuous period.

(5) It is in the Nation’s interest to undertake
a project to collect oral histories of individuals from
the Civil Rights movement so future generations will
be able to learn of their struggle and sacrifice
through primary-source, eyewitness material. A co-
ordinated Federal project would also focus attention
on the efforts undertaken by various public and pri-
ivate entities to collect and interpret articles in all
formats relating to the Civil Rights movement, and
serve as a model for future projects undertaken in
museums, libraries, and universities throughout the
Nation.

(6) The Library of Congress and the Smithso-
nian Institution are appropriate repositories to col-
lect, preserve, and make available to the public a col-
lection of these oral histories. The Library and
Smithsonian have expertise in the management of
documentation projects, and experience in the devel-
opment of cultural and educational programs for the
public.
(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to create a new federally sponsored, authorized, and funded project that will coordinate at a national level the collection of video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the American Civil Rights movement that will build upon and complement previous and ongoing documentary work on this subject, and to assist and encourage local efforts to preserve the memories of such individuals so that Americans of all current and future generations may hear from them directly and better appreciate the sacrifices they made.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT PROJECT AT LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE TO COLLECT VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS OF HISTORIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

(a) Establishment of Project.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Within the limits of available funds, the Librarian of Congress (hereafter referred to as the “Librarian”) and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (hereafter referred to as the “Secretary”), acting jointly, shall establish an oral history project—
(A) to survey, during the initial phase of
the project, collections of audio and video re-
cordings of the reminiscences of participants in
the Civil Rights movement that are housed in
archives, libraries, museums, and other edu-
cational institutions, as well as ongoing docu-
mentary work, in order to augment and com-
plement these endeavors and avoid duplication
of effort;

(B) to solicit, reproduce, and collect—

(i) video and audio recordings of per-
sonal histories and testimonials of individ-
uals who participated in the Civil Rights
movement, and

(ii) visual and written materials (such
as letters, diaries, photographs, and
ephemera) relevant to the personal his-
tories of individuals;

(C) to create a collection of the recordings
and other materials obtained, and to catalog
and index the collection in a manner the Li-
brarian and the Secretary consider appropriate;
and

(D) to make the collection available for
public use through the Library of Congress and
the National Museum of African American History and Culture, as well as through such other methods as the Librarian and the Secretary consider appropriate.

(2) ROLE OF DIRECTOR OF MUSEUM.—The Secretary shall carry out the Secretary’s duties under this Act through the Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

(b) USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES.—The Librarian and the Secretary may carry out the activities described in subsection (a)(1) through agreements and partnerships entered into with other government and private entities, and may otherwise consult with interested persons (within the limits of available resources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrangements for soliciting, acquiring, and making available recordings under the project under this Act.

(c) SERVICES OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS; ACCEPTANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES; ADVANCE PAYMENTS.—In carrying out activities described in subsection (a)(1), the Librarian and the Secretary may—

(1) procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) accept and utilize the services of volunteers and other uncompensated personnel and reimburse...
them for travel expenses, including per diem, as au-

thorized under section 5703 of title 5, United States
Code; and

(3) make advances of money and payments in

advance in accordance with section 3324 of title 31,

United States Code.

(d) TIMING.—As soon as practicable after the enact-

ment of this Act, the Librarian and the Secretary shall

begin collecting video and audio recordings and other ma-
terials under subsection (a)(1), and shall attempt to collect

the first such recordings from the oldest individuals in-
volved.

(e) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term “Civil Rights

movement” means the movement to secure racial equality

in the United States for African Americans that, focusing

on the period 1954 through 1968, challenged the practice

of racial segregation in the Nation and achieved equal

rights legislation for all American citizens.

SEC. 4. PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY

PROJECT.

(a) ENCOURAGING SOLICITATION AND ACCEPTANCE

OF DONATIONS.—The Librarian of Congress and the Sec-

retary are encouraged to solicit and accept donations of

funds and in-kind contributions to support activities under

section 3.
(b) Dedication of Funds Provided to Library of Congress.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) any funds donated to the Librarian of Congress to support the activities of the Librarian under section 3 shall be deposited entirely into an account established for such purpose;

(2) the funds contained in such account shall be used solely to support such activities; and

(3) the Librarian of Congress may not deposit into such account any funds donated to the Librarian which are not donated for the exclusive purpose of supporting such activities.


There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act—

(1) $500,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

(2) such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2010 through 2013.

Passed the House of Representatives September 17, 2008.

Attest:

Clerk.
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