

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 998

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.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2007

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

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## A BILL

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.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Civil Rights History  
3 Project Act of 2007”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

5 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

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

9 (2) The actions of those who participated in the  
10 Civil Rights movement from the 1950’s through the  
11 1960’s are a shining example of this principle in ac-  
12 tion, demonstrated in events as varied as the Mont-  
13 gomery Bus Boycott, the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides,  
14 the March on Washington, the drive for voting  
15 rights in Mississippi, and the March to Selma.

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

22 (4) The participants in the Civil Rights move-  
23 ment possess an invaluable resource in their first-  
24 hand memories of the movement, and the recording  
25 of the retelling of their stories and memories will

1 provide a rich, detailed history of our Nation during  
2 an important and tumultuous period.

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

15 (6) The Library of Congress and the Smithso-  
16 nian Institution are appropriate repositories to col-  
17 lect, preserve, and make available to the public a col-  
18 lection of these oral histories. The Library and  
19 Smithsonian have expertise in the management of  
20 documentation projects, and experience in the devel-  
21 opment of cultural and educational programs for the  
22 public.

23 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to create  
24 a new federally sponsored, authorized, and funded project  
25 that will coordinate at a national level the collection of

1 video and audio recordings of personal histories and  
2 testimonials of individuals who participated in the Amer-  
3 ican Civil Rights movement that will build upon and com-  
4 plement previous and ongoing documentary work on this  
5 subject, and to assist and encourage local efforts to pre-  
6 serve the memories of such individuals so that Americans  
7 of all current and future generations may hear from them  
8 directly and better appreciate the sacrifices they made.

9 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT PROJECT AT LIBRARY**  
10 **OF CONGRESS AND NATIONAL MUSEUM OF**  
11 **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE**  
12 **TO COLLECT VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS**  
13 **OF HISTORIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN AMER-**  
14 **ICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.**

15 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROJECT.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Within the limits of avail-  
17 able funds, the Librarian of Congress (hereafter re-  
18 ferred to as the “Librarian”) and the Secretary of  
19 the Smithsonian Institution (hereafter referred to as  
20 the “Secretary”), acting jointly, shall establish an  
21 oral history project—

22 (A) to survey, during the initial phase of  
23 the project, collections of audio and video re-  
24 cordings of the reminiscences of participants in  
25 the Civil Rights movement that are housed in

1 archives, libraries, museums, and other edu-  
2 cational institutions, as well as ongoing docu-  
3 mentary work, in order to augment and com-  
4 plement these endeavors and avoid duplication  
5 of effort;

6 (B) to solicit, reproduce, and collect—

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

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

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

20 (D) to make the collection available for  
21 public use through the Library of Congress and  
22 the National Museum of African American His-  
23 tory and Culture, as well as through such other  
24 methods as the Librarian and the Secretary  
25 consider appropriate.

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

5           (b) USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTI-  
6       TIES.—The Librarian and the Secretary may carry out the  
7       activities described in subsection (a)(1) through agree-  
8       ments and partnerships entered into with other govern-  
9       ment and private entities, and may otherwise consult with  
10      interested persons (within the limits of available re-  
11      sources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrange-  
12      ments for soliciting, acquiring, and making available re-  
13      cordings under the project under this Act.

14          (c) SERVICES OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS; AC-  
15      CEPTANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES; ADVANCE PAY-  
16      MENTS.—In carrying out activities described in subsection  
17      (a)(1), the Librarian and the Secretary may—

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

20           (2) accept and utilize the services of volunteers  
21      and other uncompensated personnel and reimburse  
22      them for travel expenses, including per diem, as au-  
23      thorized under section 5703 of title 5, United States  
24      Code; and



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

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

7           (3) the Librarian of Congress may not deposit  
8           into such account any funds donated to the Librar-  
9           ian which are not donated for the exclusive purpose  
10          of supporting such activities.

11 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

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

14           (1) \$500,000 for fiscal year 2008; and

15           (2) such sums as may be necessary for each of  
16          the fiscal years 2009 through 2012.

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