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119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 730

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

Mrs. GILLIBRAND introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument, and for other purposes.

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 ''African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center Study Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MUSEUM.—The term ''Museum'' means the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center.

(2) NATIONAL MONUMENT.—The term ''National Monument'' means the African Burial Ground National Monument in the city of New York, New York.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

(4) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of New York.

SEC. 3. AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND INTERNATIONAL MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER STUDY.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with State and local historic preservation officers, State and local historical societies, State and local tourism offices, and other appropriate organizations and government agencies, shall conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing a museum and educational center at the National Monument, to be known as the ''African

Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center''—

(A) to serve as a permanent living memorial and special tribute—

(i) to the enslaved who are buried at the African Burial Ground; and

(ii) to other Africans who were enslaved in the United States and other parts of the world;

(B) to reflect on the significance of the African Burial Ground;

(C) to examine the African cultural traditions brought to the United States by the enslaved;

(D) to explore in-depth the institution of slavery in the United States and other parts of the world;

(E) to provide a space for—

(i) permanent and temporary exhibits; and

(ii) the collection and study of artifacts and documents;

(F) to encourage collaboration between the Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, other museums,

historically Black colleges and universities, historical societies, educational institutions, and other appropriate entities and organizations, such as the African Burial Ground Memorial Foundation, including collaboration with respect to—

(i) the development of cooperative programs and exhibitions, including through digital, electronic, and interactive technologies;

(ii) the identification, management, and care of Museum collections; and

(iii) the training of Museum and National Park Service professionals and other persons concerned with heritage preservation; and

(G) in addition to any collaboration encouraged under subparagraph (F), to be associated with the National Museum of African American History and Culture, in a manner to be determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The study conducted under paragraph (1) shall include analysis, documentation, and determinations regarding whether—

(A) there is an assemblage of collections to be acquired and housed in the Museum that—

(i) represent distinctive aspects of African cultural traditions brought to the United States by the enslaved;

(ii) are worthy of recognition, conservation, and interpretation;

(iii) are important to any identified themes of the Museum;

(iv) include DNA samples of well-preserved human remains that would enable researchers to trace home ''roots'' in Africa of those individuals buried at the African Burial Ground; and

(v) are unlike any other anthropological collection in other symbolic sites;

(B) the Museum provides outstanding opportunities—

(i) to understand how the international slave trade contributed to the African diaspora;

(ii) to explore in-depth the institution of slavery, as practiced in other parts of the world and in urban, rural, northern, and southern parts of the United States; and

(iii) to help the people of the United States understand the past and honor the history of all people in the United States;

(C) residents, business interests, State and local governments, and nonprofit organizations, such as the African Burial Ground Memorial Foundation—

(i) are involved in the planning of the Museum;

(ii) have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles of all participants in the Museum, including the Federal Government; and

(iii) have demonstrated support for the designation of the Museum;

(D) the Secretary of the Interior, the Administrator of the General Services Administration, or other potential management entities would be best suited to operate the Museum; and

(E) the public supports the proposed location for the Museum at—

(i) 22 Reade Street, which is adjacent to the National Monument; or

(ii) any area within the National Monument other than the area described in clause (i).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that describes—

(1) the results of the study under subsection (a), including a description of—

(A) the availability and cost of collections to be acquired and housed in the Museum;

(B) criteria for evaluating possible locations for the Museum in the State; and

(C) the costs of acquiring property for, constructing, operating, and maintaining the Museum; and

(2) any conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary.

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