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Public Law 108–184
108th Congress

An Act

Dec. 16, 2003
[H.R. 3491]

To establish within the Smithsonian Institution the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and for other purposes.

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

National Museum of African American History and Culture Act.
20 USC 80r note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Museum of African American History and Culture Act".

20 USC 80r.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) since its founding, the United States has grown into a symbol of democracy and freedom around the world, and the legacy of African Americans is rooted in the very fabric of the democracy and freedom of the United States;

(2) there exists no national museum within the Smithsonian Institution that—

(A) is devoted to the documentation of African American life, art, history, and culture; and

(B) encompasses, on a national level—

(i) the period of slavery;

(ii) the era of Reconstruction;

(iii) the Harlem renaissance;

(iv) the civil rights movement; and

(v) other periods associated with African American life, art, history, and culture; and

(3) a National Museum of African American History and Culture would be dedicated to the collection, preservation, research, and exhibition of African American historical and cultural material reflecting the breadth and depth of the experiences of individuals of African descent living in the United States.

20 USC 80r–1.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BOARD OF REGENTS.—The term "Board of Regents" means the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

(2) COUNCIL.—The term "Council" means the National Museum of African American History and Culture Council established by section 5.

(3) MUSEUM.—The term "Museum" means the National Museum of African American History and Culture established by section 4.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSEUM. 20 USC 80r–2.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Smithsonian Institution a museum to be known as the "National Museum of African American History and Culture".

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Museum shall be to provide for—

(1) the collection, study, and establishment of programs relating to African American life, art, history, and culture that encompass—

(A) the period of slavery;

(B) the era of Reconstruction;

(C) the Harlem renaissance;

(D) the civil rights movement; and

(E) other periods of the African American diaspora;

(2) the creation and maintenance of permanent and temporary exhibits documenting the history of slavery in America and African American life, art, history, and culture during the periods referred to in paragraph (1);

(3) the collection and study of artifacts and documents relating to African American life, art, history, and culture; and

(4) collaboration between the Museum and other museums, historically black colleges and universities, historical societies, educational institutions, and other organizations that promote the study or appreciation of African American life, art, history, or culture, including collaboration concerning—

(A) development of cooperative programs and exhibitions;

(B) identification, management, and care of collections; and

(C) training of museum professionals.

SEC. 5. COUNCIL. 20 USC 80r–3.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Smithsonian Institution a council to be known as the "National Museum of African American History and Culture Council".

(b) DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall—

(A) make recommendations to the Board of Regents concerning the planning, design, and construction of the Museum;

(B) advise and assist the Board of Regents on all matters relating to the administration, operation, maintenance, and preservation of the Museum;

(C) recommend annual operating budgets for the Museum to the Board of Regents;

(D) report annually to the Board of Regents on the acquisition, disposition, and display of objects relating to African American life, art, history, and culture; and Reports.

(E) adopt bylaws for the operation of the Council.

(2) PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Council, subject to the general policies of the Board of Regents, shall have sole authority to—

(A) purchase, accept, borrow, and otherwise acquire artifacts for addition to the collections of the Museum;

(B) loan, exchange, sell, and otherwise dispose of any part of the collections of the Museum, but only if the funds generated by that disposition are used for additions to the collections of the Museum; or

(C) specify criteria with respect to the use of the collections and resources of the Museum, including policies on programming, education, exhibitions, and research with respect to—

(i) the life, art, history, and culture of African Americans;

(ii) the role of African Americans in the history of the United States from the period of slavery to the present; and

(iii) the contributions of African Americans to society.

(3) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Council, subject to the general policies of the Board of Regents, shall have authority—

(A) to provide for preservation, restoration, and maintenance of the collections of the Museum; and

(B) to solicit, accept, use, and dispose of gifts, bequests, and devises of personal property for the purpose of aiding and facilitating the work of the Museum.

(c) COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be composed of 19 voting members as provided under paragraph (2).

(2) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Council shall include the following voting members:

(A) The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

(B) One member of the Board of Regents, appointed by the Board of Regents.

(C) Seventeen individuals appointed by the Board of Regents—

(i) taking into consideration individuals recommended by organizations and entities that are committed to the advancement of knowledge of African American life, art, history, and culture; and

(ii) taking into consideration individuals recommended by the members of the Council.

Deadline.

(3) INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—The Board of Regents shall make initial appointments to the Council under paragraph (2) not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) TERMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in this subsection, each appointed member of the Council shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(2) INITIAL APPOINTEES.—As designated by the Board of Regents at the time of appointment, of the voting members first appointed under subparagraph (C) of subsection (c)(2)—

(A) six members shall be appointed for a term of 1 year;

(B) six members shall be appointed for a term of 2 years; and

(C) five members shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(3) REAPPOINTMENT.—A member of the Council may be reappointed, except that no individual may serve on the Council

for a total of more than 2 terms. For purposes of this paragraph, the number of terms an individual serves on the Council shall not include any portion of a term for which an individual is appointed to fill a vacancy under paragraph (4)(B).

(4) VACANCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the Council—

(i) shall not affect the powers of the Council; and

(ii) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(B) TERM.—Any member of the Council appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of that term.

(e) COMPENSATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a member of the Council shall serve without pay.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Council shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Council.

(f) CHAIRPERSON.—By a majority vote of its voting members, the Council shall elect a chairperson from its members.

(g) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall meet at the call of the chairperson or on the written request of a majority of the voting members of the Council, but not fewer than twice each year.

(2) INITIAL MEETINGS.—During the 1-year period beginning on the date of the first meeting of the Council, the Council shall meet not fewer than 4 times for the purpose of carrying out the duties of the Council under this Act.

(h) QUORUM.—A majority of the voting members of the Council holding office shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business, but a lesser number may receive information on behalf of the Council.

SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF OF THE MUSEUM. 20 USC 80r–4.

(a) DIRECTOR.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Museum shall have a Director who shall be appointed by the Secretary, taking into consideration individuals recommended by the Council.

(2) DUTIES.—The Director shall manage the Museum subject to the policies of the Board of Regents.

(b) STAFF.—The Secretary may appoint two additional employees to serve under the Director, except that such additional employees may be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service.

(c) PAY.—The employees appointed by the Secretary under subsection (b) may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates.

SEC. 7. EDUCATIONAL AND LIAISON PROGRAMS. 20 USC 80r–5.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED.—The Director of the Museum may carry out educational and liaison programs in support of the goals of the Museum.

(2) SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—In carrying out this section, the Director shall—

(A) carry out educational programs relating to African American life, art, history, and culture, including—

(i) programs using digital, electronic, and interactive technologies; and

(ii) programs carried out in collaboration with elementary schools, secondary schools, and postsecondary schools; and

(B) consult with the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services concerning the grant and scholarship programs carried out under subsection (b).

(b) GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In consultation with the Council and the Director of the Museum, the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services shall establish—

(A) a grant program with the purpose of improving operations, care of collections, and development of professional management at African American museums;

(B) a grant program with the purpose of providing internship and fellowship opportunities at African American museums;

(C) a scholarship program with the purpose of assisting individuals who are pursuing careers or carrying out studies in the arts, humanities, and sciences in the study of African American life, art, history, and culture;

(D) in cooperation with other museums, historical societies, and educational institutions, a grant program with the purpose of promoting the understanding of modern-day practices of slavery throughout the world; and

(E) a grant program under which an African-American museum (including a nonprofit education organization the primary mission of which is to promote the study of African-American diaspora) may use the funds provided under the grant to increase an endowment fund established by the museum (or organization) as of May 1, 2003, for the purposes of—

(i) enhancing educational programming; and

(ii) maintaining and operating traveling educational exhibits.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services to carry out this subsection—

(A) $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2004; and

(B) such sums as are necessary for each fiscal year thereafter.

20 USC 80r–6.

SEC. 8. BUILDING FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) LOCATION.—

Deadline.

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Board of Regents shall designate a site for the Museum.

(B) SITES FOR CONSIDERATION.—In designating a site under subparagraph (A), the Board of Regents shall select from among the following sites in the District of Columbia:

(i) The Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian Institution, located on the National Mall at 900 Jefferson Drive, Southwest, Washington, District of Columbia.

(ii) The area bounded by Constitution Avenue, Madison Drive, and 14th and 15th Streets, Northwest.

(iii) The site known as the "Liberty Loan site", located on 14th Street Southwest at the foot of the 14th Street Bridge.

(iv) The site known as the "Banneker Overlook site", located on 10th Street Southwest at the foot of the L'Enfant Plaza Promenade.

(C) AVAILABILITY OF SITE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—A site described in subparagraph (B) shall remain available until the date on which the Board of Regents designates a site for the Museum under subparagraph (A).

(ii) TRANSFER TO SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—Except with respect to a site described in clause (i) of subparagraph (B), if the site designated for the Museum is in an area that is under the administrative jurisdiction of a Federal agency, as soon as practicable after the date on which the designation is made, the head of the Federal agency shall transfer to the Smithsonian Institution administrative jurisdiction over the area.

(D) CONSULTATION.—The Board of Regents shall carry out its duties under this paragraph in consultation with the following:

(i) The Chair of the National Capital Planning Commission.

(ii) The Chair of the Commission on Fine Arts.

(iii) The Chair and Vice Chair of the Presidential Commission referred to in section 10.

(iv) The Chair of the Building and Site Subcommittee of the Presidential Commission referred to in section 10.

(v) The Chair and ranking minority member of each of the following Committees:

(I) The Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate.

(II) The Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives.

(III) The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(IV) The Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(V) The Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(2) CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING.—The Board of Regents, in consultation with the Council, may plan, design, and construct a building for the Museum, which shall be located at the site designated by the Board of Regents under this paragraph.

(3) NONAPPLICABILITY OF PROVISIONS RELATING TO MONUMENTS AND COMMEMORATIVE WORKS.—Chapter 89 of title 40, United States Code, shall not apply with respect to the Museum.

(b) COST SHARING.—The Board of Regents shall pay—

(1) 50 percent of the costs of carrying out this section from Federal funds; and

(2) 50 percent of the costs of carrying out this section from non-Federal sources.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

Contracts.
20 USC 80r–7.

SEC. 9. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE.

Authority under this Act to enter into contracts or to make payments shall be effective in any fiscal year only to the extent provided in advance in an appropriations Act, except as provided under section 11(b).

20 USC 80r–8.

SEC. 10. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION.

In carrying out their duties under this Act, the Council and the Board of Regents shall take into consideration the reports and plans submitted by the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission under the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission Act of 2001 (Public Law 107–106).

20 USC 80r–9.

SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Smithsonian Institution to carry out this Act, other than sections 7(b) and 8—

(1) $17,000,000 for fiscal year 2004; and

(2) such sums as are necessary for each fiscal year thereafter.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts made available under subsection (a) shall remain available until expended.

(c) USE OF FUNDS FOR FUNDRAISING.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization under this section may be used to conduct fundraising in support of the Museum from private sources.

Approved December 16, 2003.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3491 (S. 1157):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 149 (2003):
Nov. 18, 19, considered and passed House.
Nov. 20, considered and passed Senate.