

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 20

To authorize the Architect of the Capitol to establish a Capitol Visitor Center under the East Plaza of the United States Capitol, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 1997

Mr. MICA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To authorize the Architect of the Capitol to establish a Capitol Visitor Center under the East Plaza of the United States Capitol, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Capitol Visitor Center
5 Authorization Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Architect of the Capitol,
8 under the direction of the United States Capitol Preserva-
9 tion Commission, is authorized—

1 (1) to plan, construct, equip, administer, and
2 maintain a Capitol Visitor Center under the East
3 Plaza of the United States Capitol with associated
4 improvements to the Capitol to provide access there-
5 to; and

6 (2) to reconstruct the East Plaza of the United
7 States Capitol and its environs to enhance its
8 attractiveness, safety, and security.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—It shall be the purpose of the Capitol
10 Visitor Center to provide reception facilities, educational
11 exhibits, amenities, auditoriums, and other programs and
12 facilities for members of the public visiting the United
13 States Capitol.

14 (c) DESIGN.—The design of the Capitol Visitor Cen-
15 ter shall be substantially in accordance with the Final De-
16 sign Report dated November 10, 1995, submitted by the
17 Architect of the Capitol to the Committee on Transpor-
18 tation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives,
19 the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate,
20 and the United States Capitol Preservation Commission.

21 (d) PLANS FOR EXHIBITS.—Plans and specifications
22 for the exhibits and equipping of the Capitol Visitor Cen-
23 ter shall be completed by the Architect of the Capitol as
24 soon as practicable after the commencement of construc-
25 tion.

1 (e) PROJECT DEFINED.—The activities and purposes
2 set forth in subsections (a) through (d) are hereinafter
3 in this Act referred to as the “project”.

4 **SEC. 3. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

5 (a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any
6 other provision of law, the Architect of the Capitol is au-
7 thorized and directed to finance and develop the project
8 in accordance with this Act and in accordance with a plan
9 developed and approved in accordance with subsection (b).

10 (b) DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF PLAN.—The
11 Architect of the Capitol shall develop and submit to the
12 United States Capitol Preservation Commission for ap-
13 proval a plan that will enable the construction of the
14 project to be completed without the appropriation of funds
15 to the Legislative Branch for such purpose.

16 (c) PERFORMANCE OF ACTIVITIES.—The perform-
17 ance of any activity contemplated by a plan approved
18 under subsection (b) (or by any special purpose entity cre-
19 ated pursuant to this Act) of any activity is expressly au-
20 thorized. Such activities may include the following:

21 (1) The establishment of 1 or more special pur-
22 pose not-for-profit entities (corporations, partner-
23 ships, or otherwise) in connection with the project.

24 (2) One or more borrowings from the Federal
25 Financing Bank, for which purpose the Architect of

1 the Capitol (and any special purpose entity created
2 pursuant to the plan) shall be deemed a Federal
3 agency within the meaning of section 3 of the Fed-
4 eral Financing Bank Act of 1973 (12 U.S.C. 2282).

5 (3) Execution and delivery by the Architect of
6 the Capitol (or by any special purpose entity created
7 pursuant to the plan) of multiple-year agreements,
8 contracts, leases, guaranties, instruments of indebt-
9 edness, or such other documentation as may be nec-
10 essary or desirable to facilitate, support, or act as
11 collateral for the project or to provide goods or serv-
12 ices to or for the benefit of the project.

13 (c) USE OF GIFTS.—Gifts received pursuant to sec-
14 tion 5 of this Act shall be used to reduce, discharge, or
15 provide collateral for any indebtedness incurred in connec-
16 tion with the project (whether incurred prior or subse-
17 quent to the receipt of such gift) until such indebtedness
18 (including any accrued but unpaid interest thereon) has
19 been repaid in full.

20 **SEC. 4. CONSTRUCTION.**

21 (a) BUILDING CODES.—The project shall meet design
22 standards applicable under nationally recognized building

1 codes, as determined by the Architect of the Capitol. Dur-
2 ing construction, the Architect shall conduct periodic in-
3 spections for the purpose of assuring that such standards
4 are being met.

5 (c) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN LAWS.—The project
6 shall not be subject to any Federal or State law (including
7 laws of the District of Columbia) relating to taxes, build-
8 ing codes, permits, or inspections.

9 **SEC. 5. GIFTS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of carrying out
11 the project, the Architect of the Capitol may solicit, re-
12 ceive, accept, hold, and dispose of gifts or donations of
13 services or property.

14 (b) DEPOSIT OF RECEIPTS.—Subsequent to the re-
15 payment of all indebtedness and subject to the provisions
16 of the plan approved pursuant to section 3, the Architect
17 of the Capitol shall deposit into the account established
18 by section 6(a) all monetary gifts received under sub-
19 section (a) and all proceeds from the disposition of non-
20 monetary gifts received under subsection (a).

21 (c) TREATMENT UNDER TAX LAWS.—Any gift ac-
22 cepted in accordance with the plan approved pursuant to
23 section 3 shall be considered a gift to the United States
24 for the purposes of income, estate, and gift tax laws of
25 the United States.

1 **SEC. 6. ACCOUNT IN THE TREASURY.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
3 Treasury of the United States a separate account entitled
4 “Architect of the Capitol, Capitol Buildings and Grounds,
5 Capitol Visitor Center, Gifts and Donations” which shall
6 consist of amounts deposited into the account by the Ar-
7 chitect of the Capitol under section 5(b) and amounts
8 credited to the account pursuant to this section.

9 (b) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—Funds in the ac-
10 count established by subsection (a) shall be available to
11 the Architect of the Capitol for carrying out the project
12 in such amounts as are specified in appropriations Acts.
13 Such funds shall not be subject to any fiscal year limita-
14 tion.

15 (c) REPORTING OF TRANSACTIONS.—Receipts, obli-
16 gations, and expenditures of funds in the account estab-
17 lished by subsection (a) shall be reported in annual esti-
18 mates submitted to Congress by the Architect of the Cap-
19 itol for the operation and maintenance of the Capitol
20 Buildings and Grounds.

21 (d) INVESTMENT.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treas-
23 ury shall invest such portion of the account estab-
24 lished by subsection (a) as is not, in the judgment
25 of the Secretary, required to meet current withdraw-
26 als. Such investments may be made only in interest-

1 bearing obligations of the United States. For such
2 purpose, such obligations may be acquired—

3 (A) on original issue at the issue price; or

4 (B) by purchase of outstanding obligations
5 at the market price.

6 (2) SALE OF OBLIGATIONS.—Any obligation ac-
7 quired by the account may be sold at the market
8 price.

9 (3) INTEREST ON CERTAIN PROCEEDS.—The
10 interest on, and the proceeds from the sale or re-
11 demption of, any obligations held in the account
12 shall be credited to and form part of the account.

13 **SEC. 7. AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT.**

14 To assure that only the most responsible, experi-
15 enced, and qualified parties are utilized to carry out the
16 project, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the
17 Architect of the Capitol may establish competitive proce-
18 dures for such work by the use of prequalification stand-
19 ards and may award contracts on the basis of contractor
20 qualifications as well as price. Such procedures and con-
21 tract awards shall be final and conclusive upon all officers
22 of the government.

1 **SEC. 8. SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF UNITED STATES CAPITOL**
2 **PRESERVATION COMMISSION.**

3 (a) DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS.—The United
4 States Capitol Preservation Commission is authorized to
5 delegate to the Special Committee appointed pursuant to
6 the amendment made by subsection (b) the functions of
7 the Commission under this Act.

8 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 801 of the Arizona-
9 Idaho Conservation Act of 1988 (40 U.S.C. 188a) is
10 amended by adding at the end the following:

11 “(f) SPECIAL COMMITTEE.—

12 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Commission is au-
13 thORIZED to establish a Special Committee consisting
14 of 3 members as follows:

15 “(A) One Member of the House of Rep-
16 resentatives to be appointed by the Commission.

17 “(B) One Member of the Senate to be ap-
18 pointed by the Commission.

19 “(C) One Member of the House of Rep-
20 resentatives or the Senate or 1 knowledgeable
21 and experienced private citizen to be appointed
22 by the 2 members appointed pursuant to sub-
23 paragraphs (A) and (B).

24 “(2) CHAIRMAN; FUNCTIONS.—The Special
25 Committee established pursuant to paragraph (1)
26 shall elect its own chairperson and shall provide the

1 Architect of the Capitol with all necessary oversight
2 and direction in the exercise of the authority granted
3 to the Architect under the Capitol Visitor Center
4 Authorization Act of 1996.”.

5 **SEC. 9. REPEAL.**

6 The provisions of title III of the National Visitor Cen-
7 ter Facilities Act of 1968 (82 Stat. 43) shall be super-
8 seded and repealed to the extent that such provisions are
9 inconsistent with the provisions of the plan approved pur-
10 suant to section 3.

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