

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2424

To authorize assistance for the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum
and Justice Learning Center.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 11, 2003

Mr. CUMMINGS (for himself, Mr. BALLANCE, Mr. BOYD, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COLE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEUTSCH, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. FORD, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. FROST, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HOUGHTON, Mr. HOYER, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. McDERMOTT, Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. NORTON, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WATERS, Mr. WYNN, Mr. TOWNS, Ms. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. WATT, Ms. WATSON, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. CLYBURN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize assistance for the National Great Blacks in
Wax Museum and Justice Learning Center.

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 “National Great Black
3 Americans Commemoration Act of 2003”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Black Americans have served honorably in
7 the Congress, in senior executive branch positions, in
8 the law, the judiciary and other fields, yet their
9 record of service is not well known by the public, is
10 not included in school history lessons, and is not
11 adequately presented in the Nation’s museums.

12 (2) The Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc. in
13 Baltimore, Maryland, a nonprofit organization, is
14 the Nation’s first wax museum presenting the his-
15 tory of great Black Americans, including those who
16 have served in Congress, in senior executive branch
17 positions, in the law, the judiciary and other fields,
18 as well as others who have made significant con-
19 tributions to benefit the Nation.

20 (3) The Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc.
21 plans to expand its existing facilities to establish the
22 National Great Blacks in Wax Museum and Justice
23 Learning Center, which is intended to serve as a na-
24 tional museum and center for presentation of wax
25 figures and related interactive educational exhibits
26 portraying the history of great Black Americans.

1 (4) The wax medium has long been recognized
2 as a unique and artistic means to record human his-
3 tory through preservation of the faces and person-
4 ages of people of prominence, and historically, wax
5 exhibits were used to commemorate noted figures in
6 ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, in me-
7 dieval Europe, and in the art of the Italian renais-
8 sance.

9 (5) The Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc. was
10 founded in 1983 by Drs. Elmer and Joanne Martin,
11 two Baltimore educators who used their personal
12 savings to purchase wax figures, which they dis-
13 played in schools, churches, shopping malls, and fes-
14 tivals in the mid-Atlantic region.

15 (6) The goal of the Martins was to test public
16 reaction to the idea of a Black history wax museum
17 and so positive was the response over time that the
18 museum has been heralded by the public and the
19 media as a national treasure.

20 (7) The museum has been the subject of feature
21 stories by CNN, the Wall Street Journal, the Balti-
22 more Sun, the Washington Post, the New York
23 Times, the Chicago Sun Times, the Dallas Morning
24 News, the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, the Afro

1 American Newspaper, Crisis, Essence Magazine, and
2 others.

3 (8) More than 300,000 people from across the
4 Nation visit the museum annually.

5 (9) The new museum will carry on the time-
6 honored artistic tradition of the wax medium; in par-
7 ticular, it will recognize the significant value of this
8 medium to commemorate and appreciate great Black
9 Americans whose faces and personages are not wide-
10 ly recognized.

11 (10) The museum will employ the most skilled
12 artisans in the wax medium, use state-of-the-art
13 interactive exhibition technologies, and consult with
14 museum professionals throughout the Nation, and
15 its exhibits will feature the following:

16 (A) Blacks who have served in the Senate
17 and House of Representatives of the United
18 States, including those who represented con-
19 stituencies in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Lou-
20 isiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Caro-
21 lina, and Virginia during the 19th century.

22 (B) Blacks who have served in the judici-
23 ary, in the Department of Justice, as prominent
24 attorneys, in law enforcement, and in the strug-
25 gle for equal rights under the law.

1 (C) Black veterans of various military en-
2 gagements, including the Buffalo Soldiers and
3 Tuskegee Airmen, and the role of Blacks in the
4 settlement of the western United States.

5 (D) Blacks who have served in senior execu-
6 tive branch positions, including members of
7 Presidents' Cabinets, Assistant Secretaries and
8 Deputy Secretaries of Federal agencies, and
9 Presidential advisors.

10 (E) Other Blacks whose accomplishments
11 and contributions to human history during the
12 last millennium and to the Nation through
13 more than 400 years are exemplary, including
14 Black educators, authors, scientists, inventors,
15 athletes, clergy, and civil rights leaders.

16 (11) The museum plans to develop collaborative
17 programs with other museums, serve as a clearing-
18 house for training, technical assistance, and other
19 resources involving use of the wax medium, and
20 sponsor traveling exhibits to provide enriching mu-
21 seum experiences for communities throughout the
22 Nation.

23 (12) The museum has been recognized by the
24 State of Maryland and the city of Baltimore as a
25 preeminent facility for presenting and interpreting

1 Black history, using the wax medium in its highest
2 artistic form.

3 (13) The museum is located in the heart of an
4 area designated as an empowerment zone, and is
5 considered to be a catalyst for economic and cultural
6 improvements in this economically disadvantaged
7 area.

8 **SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE FOR NATIONAL GREAT BLACKS IN WAX**
9 **MUSEUM AND JUSTICE LEARNING CENTER.**

10 (a) ASSISTANCE FOR MUSEUM.—Subject to sub-
11 section (b), the Attorney General, acting through the Of-
12 fice of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice,
13 shall, from amounts made available under subsection (c),
14 make a grant to the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc.
15 in Baltimore, Maryland, to pay the Federal share of the
16 costs of expanding and creating the National Great Blacks
17 in Wax Museum and Justice Learning Center, including
18 the cost of its design, planning, furnishing, and equipping.

19 (b) GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under
21 subsection (a), the Great Blacks in Wax Museum,
22 Inc. shall submit to the Attorney General a proposal
23 for the use of the grant, which shall include detailed
24 plans for the design, construction, furnishing, and

1 equipping of the National Great Blacks in Wax Mu-
2 seum and Justice Learning Center.

3 (2) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of
4 the costs described in subsection (a) shall not exceed
5 25 percent.

6 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
7 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
8 \$15,000,000, to remain available until expended.

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