

also continued its Open Doors Program, allowing more students from at-risk or economically disadvantaged schools to visit the museum.

At a time when environmental stewardship is more important than ever, I am proud to join my fellow Nevadans in celebrating this important milestone. As we look back on 25 years of scientific exploration and discovery, we look forward to many more in the future.

OPENING OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this weekend the doors will open on a new American treasure. The National Museum of African American History and Culture tells the story of a people whose toil and genius helped create America and whose contributions in every walk of life have enriched our Nation beyond measure.

The museum stands majestically on the National Mall, at the foot of the Washington Monument.

If you stand at the museum's entrance and look in one direction you see the Lincoln Memorial, where Marian Anderson sang and Dr. King spoke of his dream for America.

Look in the other direction and you can see a plot of land where, just several generations ago, men, women and children were sold like chattel—close enough to this Capitol that members of Congress could hear their anguished cries.

Those stories and many, many more, are chronicled within the walls of this ambitious and long overdue museum.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture represents America's first official attempt to tell the story of African Americans—a story that spans 600 years and stretches from the indignity and inhumanity of slavery to the long and still ongoing march for freedom that changed our Nation and our world.

As one writer described it, the museum is “a shifting mix of sadness and celebration.” It is a record of brutal subjugation, racial violence, and discrimination—and it is the story of a resilient people who survived those horrors and created a rich and vibrant culture.

The new museum is the 19th in the priceless portfolio of the Smithsonian Institution.

If you ask African Americans about the significance of the new museum, you are likely to hear many answers. One answer you will hear over and over is: “Now our ancestors can rest.”

At long last, the stories of struggle, perseverance, and achievement that have been passed down, generation after generation, in African-American families finally have an official and honored repository in America.

Speakers at the museum's opening on Saturday will include President Barack Obama and former President George W.

Bush—two Presidents, one Republican and one Democrat, a White man and our Nation's first African-American President. Imagine the ancestors' delight at that line-up.

As many as 100,000 people from all over America are expected to visit the museum on this opening weekend—like one giant, proud family reunion.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture tells the harrowing story of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation. It also documents the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s—the template for the women's movement, the disability rights movement, and other modern human rights struggles in America and around the world.

But the Museum of African American History and Culture is more than a story of suffering and struggle. It is a celebration of resilience and triumph—of faith in America and in a better future.

It showcases the countless ways in which African Americans have enriched and enlivened American culture and society—in sports, music, literature, and art—in commerce and business, and in scientific discovery.

While it focuses on African Americans, it is a museum for all Americans—because you cannot truly understand American history without understanding African-American history and the difficult, often inspirational, and always central role that African Americans have played in our history.

Lonnie Bunch III is a brilliant historian and educator. He is also the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

As he says, the history of African Americans is “the quintessential American story,” a story of measured progress and remarkable achievement after an ugly period of painful oppression.

From 2001 to 2005, Lonnie Bunch served as president of the Chicago Historical Society, now called the Chicago History Museum. That is where I came to know and respect him.

During his short tenure, Lonnie Bunch oversaw a hugely successful expansion of the Chicago History Museum, and he helped broaden community support for the museum dramatically.

He became almost as much of a cultural treasure as the museum itself, and we hated to see him leave Chicago.

But the chance to help create the National Museum of African American History and Culture—literally, from the ground up—was the challenge of a lifetime.

It was also, as Lonnie Bunch will tell you, something he felt he needed to do for his ancestors, to honor their struggle and perseverance.

When he signed on to head it in 2005, the National Museum of African American History and Culture had no staff, no collection, and no building—not even a blueprint.

No Smithsonian museum had ever started life without a collection.

What is more, the museum's initial, very modest acquisitions budget meant that many of the most valuable artifacts of African-American history sell at traditional auctions were beyond the financial reach of the new museum.

So Lonnie Bunch conceived of a brilliant strategy to build the museum's collection.

He and his staff conducted “Antiques Roadshow”-style programs in 15 cities called “Save Our African American Treasures.”

Their hunt for African-American treasures kicked off in January 2008 at the Harold Washington Public Library in Chicago. Hundreds of people brought family heirlooms to be inspected and appraised.

Many of the nearly 40,000 artifacts in the new museum's collection came from these shows. In city after city, people brought treasured objects that had been in their families for years and generations and said: “We've cared for this until now. We trust the Smithsonian to keep it safe from now on.”

Among the treasures is Harriet Tubman's prayer shawl, given to her by Queen Victoria, and the great abolitionist's personal hymnal.

As the endpoint in the great migration of African Americans from the Deep South to the North, Chicago holds a special place in African-American history and that is reflected in the new museum.

One of the most powerful exhibits is the original glass casket that held the battered body of Emmett Till, the 14-year-old boy from Chicago who was viciously murdered by two White men in Mississippi in 1955. Emmett Till was kidnapped, beaten to a bloody pulp, and shot in the head. His broken body was then weighted down and thrown into a river.

His grieving mother, Mamie Till Moseley, insisted that the casket remain open during her son's funeral so the world could see what racial hatred and violence had done to her only child.

The images of Emmett's mangled body shocked the Nation's conscience and fueled the modern civil rights movement.

Rosa Parks said she was thinking of those images 3 months later when she refused to give up her seat and move to the back of the bus.

Other treasures from Chicago and Illinois include objects from the Pullman Car Company and from famed African-American publications including *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines and the Chicago Defender newspaper.

There are photographs from fair housing marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King in Marquette Park, a neighborhood in southwest Chicago in 1966. Dr. King was struck in the head by a brick thrown from an angry mob. Those marches showed America that racial animus and violence was not simply a Southern problem, it was an American problem.

Only nine African Americans have ever served in this Senate. Illinois is proud to be home to three of those Senators, including the man who went on to become our first African-American President.

Among the museum's artifacts from Barack Obama's historic public life is the entire contents of a 2008 Obama for President headquarters in Falls Church, VA—packed up—lock, stock and barrel—and preserved by the Smithsonian for future generations.

Among the museum's other treasures are a fighter jet flown by Tuskegee Airman and shards of glass from the horrific Klan bombing in 1963 of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, an act of terrorism that claimed the lives of four little girls attending Sunday school.

Other artifacts remind us that the long march to freedom is not entirely over yet.

Poll tax receipts from a century ago remind us of the need to be vigilant in protecting every Americans' constitutional right to vote.

A guard tower from the infamous Angola State Penitentiary reminds us that racial inequities persist in America's criminal justice and we have more work to do to root it out.

To borrow a phrase from the immortal Sam Cooke, the National Museum of African American History and Culture "has been a long, long time coming."

It was first proposed more than a century ago by African-American veterans of the Civil War.

Congress approved it once, in 1927, but never funded it because of the Depression.

The idea was resurrected in the late 1980s, led by Congressman JOHN LEWIS of Georgia, an icon of the civil rights movement.

For 15 years, though, a bill to create the museum was defeated.

The logjam was finally broken in 2003, when President George W. Bush took up the cause.

More than any previous Smithsonian museum, this one has relied on private donations, rather than just public dollars.

A number of celebrities have made very large gifts, including \$5 million from Michael Jordan and \$21 million from Oprah Winfrey, the largest single benefactor.

But many of the donations have come from churches, sororities and fraternities, and other African-American groups. A large amount—\$4 million—came from average people in gifts of less than \$1,000.

The new museum looks like nothing else on the National Mall. It is clad in burnished bronze grillwork and built to resemble a three-tiered crown from an old African kingdom.

Looking at it, one is reminded of the words of the writer James Baldwin. In exhorting African Americans to take pride in their history, Baldwin wrote: "Your crown has been bought and paid for. All you must do is put it on."

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is one of the great jewels in that crown. It will help the ancestors to rest and allow this and future generations to learn and be inspired, and that is cause to celebrate.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT REGARDING AMENDMENT NO. 5082 TO H.R. 5325

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have an explanatory statement regarding Senate amendment No. 5082 to H.R. 5325 printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY MR. COCHRAN OF MISSISSIPPI, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS REGARDING THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5325

The following is an explanation of the "Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act".

This Act includes the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017 (Division A), the Zika Response and Preparedness Appropriations Act, 2016 (Division B), the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2017 (Division C), and a division on rescissions of funds (Division D). H.R. 5325 was used as the vehicle for the Senate amendment.

Section 1 of the Act is the short title of the bill.

Section 2 of the Act displays a table of contents.

Section 3 of the Act states that, unless expressly provided otherwise, any reference to "this Act" contained in any division shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

Section 4 provides a statement of appropriations.

Section 5 states that each amount designated by Congress as an emergency requirement is contingent on the President so designating all such emergency amounts and transmitting such designations to Congress.

Section 6 of the Act specifies that this explanatory statement shall have the same effect with respect to the allocation of funds and implementation of this Act as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference, and it specifies that any reference to the "joint explanatory statement accompanying this Act" contained in division A shall be considered to be a reference to this explanatory statement.

References in this explanatory statement in division A (Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017) to "conferees" are deemed to be references to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and references to the "conference agreement" are deemed to be references to the recommendations in division A of this Act.

The Act does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined by clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

DIVISION A—MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

The following is an explanation of the effects of Division A, which makes appropria-

tions for Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies for fiscal year 2017. Unless otherwise noted, reference to the House and Senate reports are to House Report 114-497 and Senate Report 114-237. The language set forth in House Report 114-497 and Senate Report 114-237 should be complied with and carry the same emphasis as the language included in the joint explanatory statement, unless specifically addressed to the contrary in this joint explanatory statement. While repeating some report language for emphasis, this joint explanatory statement does not intend to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein. In cases in which the House or the Senate has directed the submission of a report, such report is to be submitted to both Houses of Congress. House or Senate reporting requirements with deadlines prior to, or within 15 days after enactment of this Act shall be submitted not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act. All other reporting deadlines not specifically directed by this joint explanatory statement are to be met.

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Bid Savings.—The conferees note that, given information for cost variation notices required by 10 U.S.C. 2853, the Department of Defense continues to have bid savings on previously appropriated military construction projects. Therefore, the agreement includes rescissions to the Army, Air Force, and Defense-Wide construction accounts. The Secretary of Defense is directed to continue to submit 1002 reports on military construction bid savings at the end of each fiscal quarter to the Committees.

Missile Defense.—The conferees remain committed to rapidly implementing the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). Construction of the first Aegis Ashore missile defense site in Deveselu, Romania, is complete and the site is operational. The Committees fully funded construction of the second site at Redzikowo, Poland, in fiscal year 2016, and expect the Missile Defense Agency to pursue an aggressive construction schedule to bring this critical asset online. Additionally, the conference agreement fully funds the request for the first phase of the Long Range Discrimination Radar at Clear, Alaska. This radar will dramatically improve our ability to effectively target ballistic missile threats to the homeland coming from the Pacific. As the missile threat continues to evolve, the conferees remain strongly supportive of the expeditionary deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery on Guam. The conferees encourage the Department of Defense to consider making this deployment permanent and request the appropriate military construction projects in support of this critical mission be requested in future budget submissions.

Overseas Contingency Operations.—The conference agreement includes House Title IV, Overseas Contingency Operations. The Senate bill included funding for similar projects in Title I.

Emerging Security Threats in Europe.—The conferees are aware that heightened tensions between Russia and Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 have increased security threats to European nations, particularly in Eastern Europe. In response to Russian aggression, the Administration in 2014 announced the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) to enhance allied security by increasing the presence and joint training activities of U.S. military forces in Europe. The ERI includes a number of military construction projects funded in both fiscal year 2015 and in this Act. The conferees note that although ERI military construction funding was originally intended to be a