

As my friend has pointed out, Congress established the Santa Rosa National Monument and directed the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Federal land in the monument to Escambia County, Florida, back in 1946. Just 6 months later, the land was deeded to the county. Under the terms of the conveyance, Escambia County was given the authority to lease the property on Santa Rosa Island; however, they were not allowed to issue title on the property or otherwise dispose of it or reconvey it.

In the intervening years since then, Santa Rosa Island has experienced tremendous economic growth. This growth prompted county leaders to assess property taxes on the leased lands. The imposition of taxes led to several lawsuits centered on the question of whether island residents and businessowners paying lease fees for their land could be taxed, despite not having outright ownership of the property.

Courts have reached different conclusions based on differences in the language of particular leases, which has created fairness issues for the county governments of Escambia and Santa Rosa. One property may be subject to property taxes, while a virtually identical property next door may not. This uneven treatment has prompted interest in removing the deed restriction prohibiting reconveyance, which then allows the county governments to convey ownership and create a uniform tax treatment for all properties on the beach.

Recently, both Escambia County and neighboring Santa Rosa County passed resolutions asking for a Federal solution to allow current Santa Rosa Island leaseholders the option of attaining fee simple title while protecting public access to the beaches and conservation areas on the island.

I commend my colleague, Congressman GAETZ, for listening to his constituents and working to find a solution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I appreciate my friend from California for that explanation. Hopefully, my colleague, Representative GAETZ, will try to strike a balance between protecting our environment, protecting the pristine nature of that island, as well as looking out for the best interests of his constituents when this bill gets to the Senate. So, therefore, we will not oppose it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I would simply add that one of the overarching objectives of the Federal Lands Subcommittee is to restore the Federal Government as a good neighbor to those communities impacted by the public lands. This bill is an example of that principle at work, and I would urge adoption of the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2370.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1430

AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1927) to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1927

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 American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to recognize—

(A) the importance of the African American civil rights movement; and

(B) the sacrifices made by the people who fought against discrimination and segregation; and

(2) to authorize the National Park Service to coordinate and facilitate Federal and non-Federal activities to commemorate, honor, and interpret—

(A) the history of the African American civil rights movement; and

(B) the significance of the civil rights movement as a crucial element in the evolution of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.); and

(C) the relevance of the African American civil rights movement in fostering the spirit of social justice and national reconciliation.

SEC. 3. U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subdivision 1 of Division B of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 3083 the following:

“CHAPTER 3084—U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK

“Sec.

“308401. Definition of network.

“308402. U.S. Civil Rights Network.

“308403. Cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding.

“308404. Sunset.

“§ 308401. Definition of network

“In this chapter, the term ‘Network’ means the African American Civil Rights Network established under section 308402(a).

“§ 308402. U.S. Civil Rights Network

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish, within the Service, a program to be known as the ‘U.S. Civil Rights Network’.

“(b) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—In carrying out the Network, the Secretary shall—

“(1) review studies and reports to complement and not duplicate studies of the historical importance of the African American

civil rights movement that may be underway or completed, such as the Civil Rights Framework Study;

“(2) produce and disseminate appropriate educational materials relating to the African American civil rights movement, such as handbooks, maps, interpretive guides, or electronic information;

“(3) enter into appropriate cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding to provide technical assistance under subsection (c); and

“(4)(A) create and adopt an official, uniform symbol or device for the Network; and

“(B) issue regulations for the use of the symbol or device adopted under subparagraph (A).

“(c) ELEMENTS.—The Network shall encompass the following elements:

“(1) All units and programs of the Service that are determined by the Secretary to relate to the African American civil rights movement during the period from 1939 through 1968.

“(2) With the consent of the property owner, other Federal, State, local, and privately owned properties that—

“(A) relate to the African American civil rights movement;

“(B) have a verifiable connection to the African American civil rights movement; and

“(C) are included in, or determined by the Secretary to be eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places.

“(3) Other governmental and nongovernmental facilities and programs of an educational, research, or interpretive nature that are directly related to the African American civil rights movement.

“§ 308403. Cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding

“To achieve the purposes of this chapter and to ensure effective coordination of the Federal and non-Federal elements of the Network described in section 308402(c) with System units and programs of the Service, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding with, and provide technical assistance to the heads of other Federal agencies, States, units of local government, regional governmental bodies, and private entities.

“§ 308404. Sunset

“This program shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this chapter.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 3083 the following:

“3084 U.S. Civil Rights Network308401”.

SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1927, the African American Civil Rights Network Act, introduced by our distinguished committee colleague, Congressman LACY CLAY from Missouri, directs the National Park Service to identify and create a national network of historic sites, research facilities, and educational programs connected to the modern African-American civil rights movement. The network will be comprised of existing units and programs of the National Park Service related to the African-American civil rights movement as well as the properties and programs of other Federal, State, local, and private entities that join the network.

Establishing this network of historic sites connected to the African-American civil rights movement will help preserve the legacy and the struggle of the many courageous individuals who risked their lives to secure racial equality and to put the full measure of the Declaration of Independence and its sacred principles into action.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017, updated and bipartisan legislation that I was proud to introduce along with my distinguished colleague from Missouri's Eighth Congressional District, Congressman JASON SMITH. I appreciate his leadership and true friendship as well.

Our legislation, which has already earned 72 cosponsors, would authorize the National Park Service to establish a program to preserve and protect the memory of the people and places that were significant in the struggle to securing equal rights for African Americans during the 20th century's civil rights era between 1939 and 1968.

The purpose of this legislation is to recognize, protect, and share the remarkable American story of the modern struggle for civil rights, a unique national experience that touches every American regardless of their age, region, or heritage, and yet this very American story is often left untold, without the level of honesty and accuracy that it surely deserves.

In fact, the generation now coming of age has only scant knowledge of the history of the civil rights struggle. Young Americans find it difficult to believe that racial segregation was once considered normal and necessary in the United States.

I truly believe that the healing potential for this legislation is essential to bringing our Nation together. The historic network that H.R. 1927 would create would offer tremendous educational opportunities by recognizing those brave souls from all walks of life

who fought to make the promises enshrined in our Constitution finally ring true for every American regardless of the color of their skin.

Across this great country, precious historic waypoints along the routes of that still largely untold story are at risk of being lost forever.

My hope is that the historic civil rights trails and the programs that will grow from this act will honestly tell the truth, the full and sometimes painful story of the struggle for civil rights, not just for African Americans, but to foster healing, tolerance, and understanding among all Americans.

This bill is similar to legislation that created the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998, which is currently administered by the National Park Service. It directs the Secretary of the Interior to identify and create a national network of historic sites, stories, research facilities, and educational programs connected to the modern African-American civil rights movement.

This legislation has also earned the strong support of the National Urban League, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Parks Conservation Association, and the NAACP.

Mr. Speaker, let me also commend the gentleman from California for his support of this legislation that came out of his subcommittee. I appreciate his help and strong support of it.

I look at this opportunity as something that we should all want to embrace the transformative power of the real American story. We should seize it. This bill advances that worthy goal for our Nation, and I urge my colleagues to support this important act.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE).

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MCCLINTOCK for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1927. Nearly a decade ago, the National Park Service, with the help of the Organization of American Historians, completed a study to help identify significant sites related to the modern civil rights movement. Through this effort, the National Park Service found that many sites with a connection to the movement had not been formally recognized and that many were in severe disrepair and at risk of being permanently lost.

This legislation establishes a network of sites to include all National Park Service's units and programs, as well as other Federal, State, local, and privately owned properties for the National Register of Historic Places.

A similar network was created previously by Congress to identify and commemorate the sites and stories related to the underground railroad. This bill would allow the National Park Service to build partnerships with other public and private entities to help preserve the remaining sites.

As part of my religious beliefs, I believe that knowing who you are, where you come from, is a foundation of knowing where you are and where you will be going.

History teaches us important lessons that we need to learn and grow from. Because of great leaders like Martin Luther King, President Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks, and many unsung heroes, I am here today as a Member of Congress representing the great State of Utah. We can be proud of who we are and what we believe in, that all men are created equal in the eyes of God.

It is imperative that here in the United States, that we don't make people feel like victims, and that all Americans are not afraid of, but empowered by, their history and our future.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Representative CLAY for his sponsorship of this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1927.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to commend my colleague, Mrs. LOVE from Utah. And it goes to show you that we can reach across the aisle and find common ground. I appreciate her support of this legislation, as well as I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to reciprocate the kind words of the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY). It has been a pleasure working with him on this bill.

Shakespeare put it best:

This story shall a good man teach his son.

This bill tells that story of how the full measure of our Nation's founding principles came to fruition.

I would ask for Members' support and adoption of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1927, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CALLING FOR UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF U.S. CITIZENS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS HELD FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 317) calling for the unconditional release of United States citizens and legal permanent resident aliens being held for political purposes by the Government of Iran, as amended.