

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1635

To establish within the United States National Park Service the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 1997

Mr. STOKES (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin, Mr. BISHOP, Mr. BOEHNER, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. CARSON, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. CLAY, Mrs. CLAYTON, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DELLUMS, Mr. DICKS, Mr. DIXON, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FILNER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. FORD, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. FROST, Mr. GINGRICH, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HILLIARD, Mr. HOBSON, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KASICH, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. NEY, Ms. NORTON, Mr. OWENS, Mr. OXLEY, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. POSHARD, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SAWYER, Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SISISKY, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. TRAFICANT, Ms. WATERS, Mr. WATT of North Carolina, Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma, Mr. WYNN, Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Mr. TOWNS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To establish within the United States National Park Service the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program, 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 “National Underground
5 Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Underground Railroad, which flour-
9 ished from the end of the 18th century to the end
10 of the Civil War, was one of the most significant ex-
11 pressions of the American civil rights movement dur-
12 ing its evolution over more than 3 centuries.

13 (2) The Underground Railroad bridged the di-
14 vides of race, religion, sectional differences, and na-
15 tionality; spanned State lines and international bor-
16 ders; and joined the American ideals of liberty and
17 freedom expressed in the Declaration of Independ-
18 ence and the Constitution to the extraordinary ac-
19 tions of ordinary men and women working in com-
20 mon purpose to free a people.

21 (3) Pursuant to title VI of Public Law 101–628
22 (16 U.S.C. 1a–5 note; 104 Stat. 4495), the Under-
23 ground Railroad Advisory Committee conducted a
24 study of the appropriate means of establishing an
25 enduring national commemorative Underground

1 Railroad program of education, example, reflection,
2 and reconciliation.

3 (4) The Underground Railroad Advisory Com-
4 mittee found that—

5 (A) although a few elements of the Under-
6 ground Railroad story are represented in exist-
7 ing National Park Service units and other sites,
8 many sites are in imminent danger of being lost
9 or destroyed, and many important resource
10 types are not adequately represented and pro-
11 tected;

12 (B) there are many important sites which
13 have high potential for preservation and visitor
14 use in 29 States, the District of Columbia, and
15 the Virgin Islands;

16 (C) no single site or route completely re-
17 flects and characterizes the Underground Rail-
18 road, since its story and associated resources
19 involve networks and regions of the country
20 rather than individual sites and trails; and

21 (D) establishment of a variety of partner-
22 ships between the Federal Government and
23 other levels of government and the private sec-
24 tor would be most appropriate for the protec-

1 tion and interpretation of the Underground
2 Railroad.

3 (5) The National Park Service can play a vital
4 role in facilitating the national commemoration of
5 the Underground Railroad.

6 (6) The story and significance of the Under-
7 ground Railroad can best engage the American peo-
8 ple through a national program of the National Park
9 Service that links historic buildings, structures, and
10 sites; routes, geographic areas, and corridors; inter-
11 pretive centers, museums, and institutions; and pro-
12 grams, activities, community projects, exhibits, and
13 multimedia materials, in a manner that is both uni-
14 fied and flexible.

15 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are the fol-
16 lowing:

17 (1) To recognize the importance of the Under-
18 ground Railroad, the sacrifices made by those who
19 used the Underground Railroad in search of freedom
20 from tyranny and oppression, and the sacrifices
21 made by the people who helped them.

22 (2) To authorize the National Park Service to
23 coordinate and facilitate Federal and non-Federal
24 activities to commemorate, honor, and interpret the
25 history of the Underground Railroad, its significance

1 as a crucial element in the evolution of the national
2 civil rights movement, and its relevance in fostering
3 the spirit of racial harmony and national reconcili-
4 ation.

5 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO**
6 **FREEDOM PROGRAM.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (in
8 this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall establish in
9 the National Park Service a program to be known as the
10 “National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom”
11 (in this Act referred to as the “national network”). Under
12 the program, the Secretary shall—

13 (1) produce and disseminate appropriate edu-
14 cational materials, such as handbooks, maps, inter-
15 pretive guides, or electronic information;

16 (2) enter into appropriate cooperative agree-
17 ments and memoranda of understanding to provide
18 technical assistance under subsection (c); and

19 (3) create and adopt an official, uniform symbol
20 or device for the national network and issue regula-
21 tions for its use.

22 (b) ELEMENTS.—The national network shall encom-
23 pass the following elements:

1 (1) All units and programs of the National
2 Park Service determined by the Secretary to pertain
3 to the Underground Railroad.

4 (2) Other Federal, State, local, and privately
5 owned properties pertaining to the Underground
6 Railroad that have a verifiable connection to the Un-
7 derground Railroad and that are included on, or de-
8 termined by the Secretary to be eligible for inclusion
9 on, the National Register of Historic Places.

10 (3) Other governmental and nongovernmental
11 facilities and programs of an educational, research,
12 or interpretive nature that are directly related to the
13 Underground Railroad.

14 (c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND MEMORANDA
15 OF UNDERSTANDING.—To achieve the purposes of this
16 Act and to ensure effective coordination of the Federal
17 and non-Federal elements of the national network referred
18 to in subsection (b) with National Park Service units and
19 programs, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agree-
20 ments and memoranda of understanding with, and provide
21 technical assistance to—

22 (1) the heads of other Federal agencies, States,
23 localities, regional governmental bodies, and private
24 entities; and

1 (2) in cooperation with the Secretary of State,
2 the governments of Canada, Mexico, and any appro-
3 priate country in the Caribbean.

4 (d) APPROPRIATIONS.—No amounts may be appro-
5 priated for the purposes of this Act except to the Secretary
6 for carrying out the responsibilities of the Secretary as
7 set forth in section 3(a).

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