

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman McCollum, and Ranking Member Joyce,

As your Subcommittee considers the upcoming Fiscal Year 2020 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we respectfully request that you provide \$5 million for the 400 Years of African American History Commission, which was signed into law last year (P.L. 115-102).

In August of this year, our country will be observing a very important and solemn event in our history: the 400th anniversary of “twenty and odd” enslaved Africans arriving at Point Comfort, Virginia in 1619. These slaves were the first documented Africans in the English colonies, and their arrival set the stage for the long history of oppression and hardship that Africans and African-Americans would go on to endure through slavery, Jim Crow, legalized segregation, and the civil rights movement. It would be a great disservice not only to African Americans but all Americans if we failed to appropriately recognize this important upcoming milestone in our Nation's history.

It was with this goal in mind when Congress enacted the 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act last Congress (H.R. 1242, 115th Cong.). The goal of our legislation was to establish a national commission through the National Parks Service capable of planning programs around the 400th anniversary, coordinate research to study the contributions made by Africans since their arrival, and to provide grant funding to state and local organizations already

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In the past, similarly themed anniversary and commemorative commissions received generous federal funding: the St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Commission Act of 2009 set aside \$3.5 million and a seven year duration, and the Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission Act of 2000 provided for such funds as needed and an eight year span. Additionally, although the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 passed without any allotment of federal funds, it was later appropriated \$500,000 in the recently enacted FY 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-6). On the other hand, the 400 Years of African American History Commission Act has received no federal funding set aside to date and was given a more compressed timeline of only two and a half years to complete its work. These constraints do not afford the same opportunity of this commission to be successful.

With this important context in mind, we write to respectfully request the committee include \$5 million in funding for the 400 Years of African American History Commission in the pending Fiscal Year 2020 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

For this commemoration to be successful, it requires more support and backing than it has currently received. I thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Bobby Scott
Member of Congress



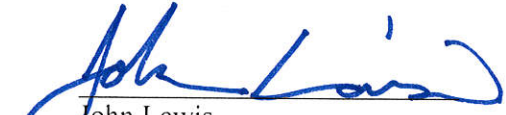
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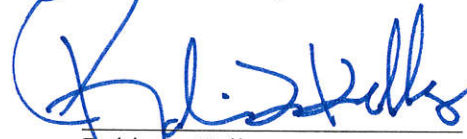
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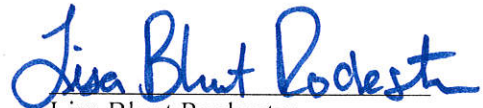
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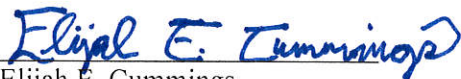
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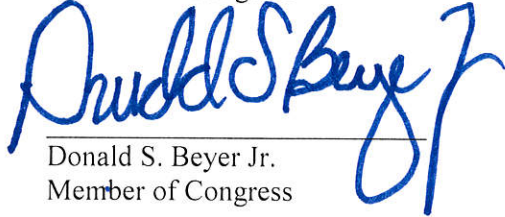


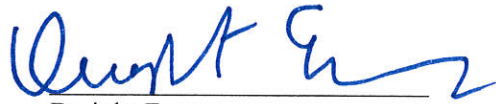
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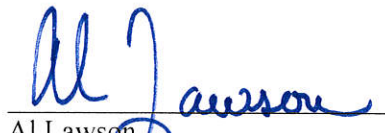

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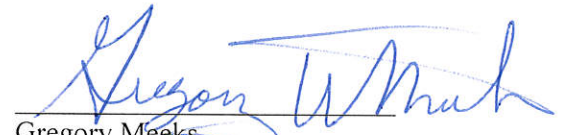

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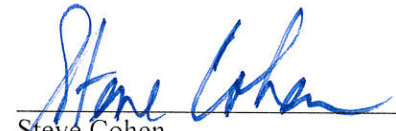

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