

Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memorandum

November 28, 2016

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x 6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on H.R. 3683 (Rep. Clay), *To amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes.*
November 30, 2016 at 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth HOB.

H.R. 3683, “African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2015”

Bill Summary

H.R. 3683, introduced by Congressman William Lacy Clay Jr. (D-MO-1), directs the National Park Service (NPS) to establish an African American Civil Rights Network that encompasses: (1) all NPS units and programs that relate to the African American Civil Rights Movement during the period from 1939 through 1968; (2) other federal, state, local, and privately owned properties that relate to the African American Civil Rights Movement and that are included in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places; and (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.

The bill also requires NPS to produce and distribute educational materials, create and adopt an official symbol for the network, establish regulations for participation, and provide technical assistance to other entities interested in joining.

Cosponsors:

[75](#)

Invited Witnesses

Panel I

The Honorable William Lacy Clay Jr. (D-MO-1)

Panel II

Dr. Stephanie S. Toothman

Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science
National Park Service
Washington, D.C.

Background

In 1999, Congress passed the “National Park Service Studies Act of 1999.”¹ This act required NPS to conduct special resource studies of various sites and areas. Among the areas to be studied were “Civil Rights Sites” on a “multi-State” level. To determine the best way to proceed, NPS partnered with the Organization of American Historians to develop an overview of civil rights history entitled, “Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites (2002, rev. 2008).”²

The framework found that while many civil rights sites had been designated as National Historic Landmarks, other sites still needed to be identified and evaluated. Therefore, the framework recommended that four National Historic Landmarks theme studies be prepared to identify sites that may be nationally significant, and that the study be based on provisions of the 1960s civil rights acts. Through completion of these theme studies, NPS found that a number of sites related to the African American Civil Rights Movement had not been recognized and many were in immediate danger of being lost or destroyed.

With these NPS studies in mind, Congressman William Lacy Clay has introduced several bills over the past five Congresses intended to better recognize and preserve sites related to the African American Civil Rights movement. H.R. 3683, introduced this Congress, requires NPS to establish an African American Civil Rights Network, the purpose of which is to coordinate federal and nonfederal activities to commemorate, honor, and interpret the history of the African American Civil Rights Movement during the period from 1939 through 1968.

The network will be comprised of existing units and programs of the NPS related to that historical period as well as the properties and programs of other federal, state, local, and private entities that join the network. Additionally, NPS will be required to produce and distribute educational materials, create and adopt an official symbol for the network, establish regulations for participation, and provide technical assistance to other entities interested in joining.

H.R. 3683 is similar to legislation that created The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998, currently administered by NPS.³ A similar Senate companion bill, S. 2309, introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), was favorably reported, with amendments, by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on July 13, 2016.

¹ Pub. L. 106-113 (54 USC 100507).

² https://www.nps.gov/nhl/learn/themes/CivilRights_Framework.pdf

³ Pub. L. 105-203 (54 U.S.C. 308302).

Administration Position

The Administration position on H.R. 3683 is unknown at this time. However, NPS offered testimony in support of a similar companion bill, S. 2309.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill. However, a CBO cost estimate provided for a similar companion bill, S. 2309, estimated the cost to be about \$5.5 million over the 2017-2021 period and an additional \$1.5 million annually thereafter.⁴

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer):

http://naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/Ramseyer_for_HR_3683.pdf

⁴ [CBO Cost Estimate, S. 2309, African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2016](#), September 2, 2016.