

September 13, 2022

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Westerman, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, representing millions of individuals and supporters across the country, we express our strong support for H.R. 6805, the African American Burial Grounds Preservation Act.

If enacted, this important legislation would authorize the National Park Service to establish a grant program, in coordination with governmental, private, and non-profit partners, to assist communities across our country in identifying, preserving, and restoring these historic and cultural sites.

Cemeteries are places of tribute and memory, connecting communities with their past. Unfortunately, many African-American burial grounds from both before and after the Civil War are in a state of disarray or inaccessibility. Beginning with slavery and continuing through the Jim Crow era, African-Americans were restricted in where they could bury their dead. Local laws segregated burial grounds by race. These sites were often confined to remote areas or marginal property, and they frequently were not provided the same sort of state or local support or assistance as predominantly white cemeteries. As a result, many jurisdictions are unaware of the existence of these historic sites. Even when their location is known, the task of restoring, preserving, and maintaining these burial grounds can be expensive, difficult, and require technical expertise.

Our organizations have witnessed first-hand the need for federal leadership to protect and preserve these important historic and cultural landmarks. The African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program would help to re-discover the existence of burial grounds ahead of commercial development, avoiding disturbances which create heartache in communities and development delays. It will aid family members, descendants, and community members in honoring and remembering their shared past. Preserving and protecting these sacred sites, and the stories they tell, is an integral part of our American heritage.

The African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Act will help preserve our shared history while also better informing development decisions and community planning.

Sincerely,

***National and Regional Organizations:***  
The 1772 Foundation, Inc.  
Afro-American Historical and Genealogical  
Society

America in Bloom  
American Anthropological Association  
American Battlefield Trust  
American History Press

American Institute of Architects  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
Archaeological Centers Coalition  
Archaeological Institute of America  
Coalition for American Heritage  
Dismantle Preservation  
Fearnbach History Services  
The Heritage Education Network  
The Institute for Field Research  
National Conference of State Historic  
Preservation Officers  
National Parks Conservation Association  
The National Trust for Historic Preservation  
New South Associates  
Preservation Action  
Sierra Club  
Society for American Archaeology  
Society of Black Archaeologists  
Society for Historical Archaeology  
United Negro College Fund

**Alabama:**

The Movement 46  
The Ridge Macon County Archaeology  
Project  
Tuskegee Macon County Community  
Foundation, Inc.

**Alaska:**

Preservation Alaska

**Arizona:**

Archaeological and Cultural Education  
Consultants, LLC  
Arizona Preservation Foundation

**Arkansas:**

Afro-American Historical & Genealogical  
Society, Arkansas Chapter  
Black Cemeteries Uncovered/African  
American Funeral Homes "The Final  
Emancipation"  
Macedonia Baptist Cemetery & Church  
Preservation Project  
Northwest Arkansas African American

Heritage Association  
Preservation African American Cemeteries,  
Inc.  
(PAAC) Preservation African American  
Cemeteries Junior Preservation Society  
Preserve Arkansas

**California:**

Save Our Heritage Organisation

**Florida:**

African American Burial Ground Project at  
University of South Florida  
African American Cemetery Alliance of  
Tampa Bay  
Black Cemetery Network  
Florida International University  
Florida Public Archaeology Network  
Whispering Souls African American  
Cemetery

**Georgia:**

Bethlehem Cemetery Society  
Friends of Brooklyn Cemetery  
Hamilton Hood Foundation  
Saving Zuber Cemetery

**Kentucky:**

Association of Black Anthropologists  
Preservation Kentucky, Inc.

**Louisiana:**

The Descendants Project

**Maryland:**

The Board of Trustees of Morningstar  
Tabernacle Number 88, Inc.  
Broadneck African - American Heritage  
Project  
Cabin John Citizens Association  
Carderock Springs Citizens Association  
The Community-Church Partnership  
Committee for the Mt. Zion AME Church  
Cemetery Rehabilitation  
Friends of Moses Hall

Laurel Cemetery Memorial Project  
Maryland Commission on African American  
History and Culture  
Preservation Maryland

**Massachusetts:**

We Capture Carbon

**Michigan:**

Abre Croche Cultural Resources LLC  
Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.  
Michigan Historic Preservation Network  
Preservation Detroit  
Turner Restoration LLC

**Minnesota:**

Council for Minnesota Archaeology  
Minnesota Archaeological Society

**Missouri:**

Center for Archaeological Research,  
Missouri State University  
City of Weston, Historic Preservation  
Commission  
Clay County African American Legacy Inc  
Family and Friends of Shady Grove  
Liberty African American Legacy Memorial  
Missouri Preservation  
Washington Park Cemetery - Anti-  
Desecration League

**Montana:**

The Extreme History Project

**New Jersey:**

Afro American Historical and Genealogical  
Society, Inc- NJ Chapter  
The Archaeological Society of New Jersey  
Council for Northeast Historical  
Archaeology  
Mount Peace Cemetery Association Inc  
Pennington African Cemetery Association

**New York:**

Brooklyn Level Up

Brooklyn Queens Land Trust  
Clinton Brown Company Architecture PC  
Elmhurst History and Cemeteries Society  
Flatbush African Burial Ground Coalition  
The Good Life Garden  
Made With Love, DUH! LLC  
Q Gardens

**North Carolina:**

Afro-American Historical & Genealogical  
Society Charlotte Chapter  
City of Durham  
Friends of Geer Cemetery  
Preservation North Carolina  
River Jordan Council on African American  
Heritage  
University of North Carolina System

**Ohio:**

ARRC Inc./Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens  
Cambridge Main Street  
Cincinnati Preservation Association  
Cleveland Restoration Society  
Columbus Landmarks Foundation  
Destination Downtown Lancaster  
Downtown Cleveland Alliance  
Green Lawn Cemetery Association  
Heritage Ohio  
Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati  
Main Street Kent  
Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation  
Society  
Oberlin Heritage Center  
Ohio Archaeological Council  
Ohio History Connection  
Ohio Museums Association  
Paul R. Sullivan AIA LLC  
Peninsula Foundation  
Preservation Ohio  
Richland Preservation Action  
Robert Colby Consulting  
Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library &  
Museums  
State Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson  
Troy Main Street, Inc

Union Foundation

**Oklahoma:**

Afendras Archaeology, LLC  
Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network  
(OKPAN)  
State Historic Preservation Office

**Oregon:**

Restore Oregon

**Pennsylvania:**

Boyetown Area Historical Society  
Friends of Midland  
Mt. Tabor Preservation Project  
Pennsylvania Archaeological Council  
Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds  
Philadelphia Archaeological Forum  
Preservation Pennsylvania

**Tennessee:**

Baskerville Memorial Cemetery Association  
(BMCA)

**Texas:**

Afro-American Genealogy and Historical  
Society Willie Lee Gay H-Town Chapter  
Convict Leasing and Labor Project  
Descendants of Olivewood, Inc.  
San Antonio African American Community  
Archive and Museum  
Staples African-American Freedmen Colony  
Association  
Texas Freedom Colonies Project

**Vermont:**

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office

**Virginia:**

Afro-American Genealogy and Historical  
Society, Greater Richmond  
Alexandria Branch, National Association for  
the Advancement of Colored People  
AMMD Pine Grove Project  
City of Roanoke

Enrichmond

Fairfield Foundation  
Friends of Fairview  
Hidden in Plain Site  
Historic Richmond  
Historic Staunton Foundation  
Josephine School Community Museum  
Preservation Piedmont  
Preservation Virginia  
Preservers of the Daughters of Zion  
Cemetery  
Racial Justice Alexandria  
Richmond Hill  
Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation  
Sacred Grounds Project  
Shenandoah Valley Black History Project  
Southside African American Cemetery  
Preservation Society  
Staunton Augusta County African American  
Research Society  
Virginia Roots

**Washington:**

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

**Washington, District of Columbia:**

African American Heritage Preservation  
Foundation, Inc.  
Archaeology in the Community

Cc: Members of the House Committee on  
Natural Resources