

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 739

Celebrating the 20-year commemoration of the International Underground Railroad Memorial Monument, comprised of the Gateway to Freedom Monument in Detroit, Michigan, and the Tower of Freedom Monument in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 21, 2021

Ms. TLAIB (for herself and Mrs. LAWRENCE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Celebrating the 20-year commemoration of the International Underground Railroad Memorial Monument, comprised of the Gateway to Freedom Monument in Detroit, Michigan, and the Tower of Freedom Monument in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Whereas millions of Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and the American colonies from 1619 through 1865;

Whereas Africans forced into slavery were unspeakably debased, humiliated, dehumanized, brutally torn from their families and loved ones, and subjected to the indignity of being stripped of their names and heritage;

Whereas tens of thousands of people of African descent silently escaped their chains to follow the perilous Underground Railroad north toward freedom in Canada;

Whereas the Detroit River played a central role for these passengers of the Underground Railroad on their way to freedom;

Whereas in October 2001, the city of Detroit, Michigan, joined with Windsor and Essex County in Ontario, Canada, to memorialize the courage of these freedom seekers with an international memorial monument to the Underground Railroad, comprising the Tower of Freedom Monument in Windsor and the Gateway to Freedom Monument in Detroit;

Whereas the deep roots that the formerly enslaved, refugees, and immigrants who reached Canada from the United States created in Canadian society remain as tributes to the determination of their descendants to safeguard the history of the struggles and endurance of their forebearers;

Whereas the observance of the 20-year commemoration of the Underground Railroad Memorial will be celebrated on October 21, 2021, and may include the designation of an International Gateway to Freedom National Heritage Corridor and the nomination of the historic Detroit River jointly by the National Park Service and the Parks Canada Agency for inclusion on the World Heritage Site list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (“UNESCO”) as a testament to the shared history of the United States and Canada;

Whereas UNESCO has stated it is essential for the field of memorial sites linked to the slave trade and slavery to be

open to new dynamics, to become stronger in terms of geographical coverage, in-depth historical research, and repossession of the history and mobilization of new audiences;

Whereas UNESCO has emphasized the importance within the field of revisiting core concepts, redefining the cultural and ethical challenges, building capacities for managing sites, developing professional networks, developing lively interactive activities, and regularly assessing experiences and practices;

Whereas UNESCO's Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage encourages countries not only to identify, assess, restore, preserve, and promote their memorial sites and itineraries, but also to identify the heritage sites considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value, and encourages the designation of "Sites of Memory associated to the Slave Route" to assist the identification and recognition of sites and places with a particular significance;

Whereas a cooperative international educational partnership project known as the Detroit River Project is dedicated to education and research with the goal of promoting cross-border understanding as well as economic development and cultural heritage tourism, and includes an educational curriculum known as "Resistance Along the Fluid Frontier: The Detroit River Project International Freedom Curriculum";

Whereas the designation of an International Gateway to Freedom National Heritage Corridor would include the States of Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Missouri, Indiana, and Kentucky; the Detroit, Mississippi, and Ohio Rivers, which traverse portions of those States; and

any other sites associated within the International Gateway to Freedom National Heritage Corridor;

Whereas over the course of history, the United States has become a symbol of democracy and freedom around the world; and

Whereas the legacy of African Americans is interwoven with the fabric of democracy and freedom in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) celebrates the 20-year commemoration of
3 the International Underground Railroad Memorial
4 Monument, comprised of the Gateway to Freedom
5 Monument in Detroit, Michigan, and the Tower of
6 Freedom Monument in Windsor, Ontario, Canada;

7 (2) supports—

8 (A) the designation of an International
9 Gateway to Freedom National Heritage Corridor;
10 ridor;

11 (B) the recognition of a transnational educational curriculum known as “Resistance
12 Along the Fluid Frontier: The Detroit River
13 Project International Freedom Curriculum”;

14 (C) the designation of the International
15 Underground Railroad Memorial Monument,
16 comprised of the Gateway to Freedom Monument
17 in Detroit, Michigan and the Tower of
18 Freedom Monument in Windsor, Ontario, Can-
19 ada;

1 ada, as a “Site of Memory associated to the
2 Slave Route” pursuant to the Slave Route
3 Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage of the
4 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cul-
5 tural Organization; and

6 (D) the nomination of the historic Detroit
7 River jointly by the National Park Service and
8 the Parks Canada Agency for inclusion on the
9 World Heritage Site list of the United Nations
10 Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organiza-
11 tion;

12 (3) recognizes that the Underground Railroad
13 Special Resource Study, published by the National
14 Park Service and dated September 1995, included
15 findings that suggest an International Gateway to
16 Freedom National Heritage Corridor may be appro-
17 priate based on national significance, suitability, and
18 feasibility; and

19 (4) acknowledges that National Heritage Areas,
20 including National Heritage Corridors—

21 (A) are designations that do not require
22 establishing new units of the National Park
23 System; and

- 1 (B) allow the National Park Service to
- 2 take on a primary role in supporting State and
- 3 local initiatives to preserve resources.

