

# S.5

To establish the Jonestown Massacre National Memorial, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE

MAY 12, 2021

Mr. MILLER (for himself, Ms. TOWARD, Mr. ABRAHAM) introduced the following bill:

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# A BILL

To establish the Jonestown Massacre National Memorial, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Jonestown Memorial Act of 2021”.

### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

- (1) James Warren “Jim” Jones was an American cult leader who led the Peoples Temple of the Disciples of Christ, a new religious movement.
- (2) The Peoples Temple was originally founded in Indianapolis, Indiana and was moved to Guyana after a lease was signed for land. The piece of land would be known as the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, or informally known as “Jonestown”.
- (3) In the early days of Jonestown, it had as few as 50 people. After Jones moved the Peoples Temple to Guyana, the community had as many as 900 people. Those who moved there were promised a tropical paradise free from the supposed wickedness of the outside world.
- (4) Jones believed people should be ready to die for the Temple immediately when called upon to do so. At one point, Jones handed out fruit punch to the members of the Temple, telling them it was filled with poison. It wasn’t until after they had drank the juice that Jones told them that there was no poison found. It was around this point when the people of Jonestown wished to leave.

- (5) On November 17, 1978, former Representative Leo Ryan traveled to Jonestown to investigate claims of abuse within the Temple. During the Congressman's visit, members of the Temple desired to leave with Ryan and travel back to the United States.
- (6) On November 18, Ryan allowed a group of 15 people to travel back to the United States with him, which angered Jones. Jones ordered gunman to go follow the defectors. As they tried to board the plane to flee, the gunman fired, killing 5 people, including Congressman Ryan, and 2 members of NBC News. Former Congresswoman Jackie Speier was shot five times and had to wait 22 hours for help to arrive, but survived.
- (7) Following the shooting, Jones gathered his followers for one final sermon. Later that evening, Jones ordered everyone in the Temple to drink a concoction of cyanide-laced Flavor-Aid. Anyone who refused to drink the Flavor-Aid was shot dead.
- (8) In the ensuing mass-suicide, there were 918 confirmed deaths, with 276 of them being children. Jones then committed suicide, dying from gunshot wound. It was the greatest single loss of American civilian life in a deliberate act until the events of September 11, 2001.

### **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act:

- (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the General Services Administration.
- (2) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The term “Advisory Council” means the Jonestown Massacre National Memorial Advisory Council established under section 5.
- (3) D.C..—The term “D.C.” means Washington, District of Columbia.
- (4) NATIONAL MEMORIAL.—The term “National Memorial” means the Jonestown Massacre National Memorial established under section 4.
- (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

### **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF MEMORIAL.**

- (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish, in D.C., a National Memorial to be known as the “Jonestown Massacre National Memorial”.
- (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the National Memorial is to remember and memorialize the individuals killed in the Jonestown Massacre in 1978.
- (c) PLACEMENT.—The Secretary shall work with the Advisory Council established under section 5 to enter into agreements to acquire land for the National Memorial to be placed.

### **SEC. 5. ADVISORY COUNCIL.**

- (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish an Advisory Council to be known as the “Jonestown Massacre National Memorial Advisory Council” under the Department of Interior.
- (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Advisory Council shall be composed of:
  - (1) The Secretary, who shall serve as the Chairperson of the Advisory Council.
  - (2) The Director of the National Park Service.
  - (3) The Administrator.
  - (4) The Mayor of D.C..
  - (5) The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.
  - (6) Fourteen other members, to be nominated by the Secretary and confirmed by a majority vote of the Advisory Council, with the Secretary taking into account personal experience or extensive knowledge of the Jonestown Massacre.
- (c) DUTIES.—The Advisory Council shall—
  - (1) enter into agreements in order to acquire land for the National Memorial pursuant to section 4(c);
  - (2) brainstorm and draft a design for the National Memorial;
  - (3) adopt bylaws for the operation of the Advisory Council;
  - (4) advise and assist the Secretary on all matters relating to the administration, operation, maintenance, and preservation of the Museum;
  - (5) provide significant opportunities for public input with respect to carrying out the duties under paragraphs (2) and (4); and
  - (6) anything else the Secretary may choose.
- (d) MEETINGS.—Notwithstanding any rule the Advisory Council may create under section 5(c)(3), the Advisory Council shall meet not less than twice every two months.

## **SEC. 6. NAMES OF VICTIMS.**

- (a) IN GENERAL.—The Advisory Council shall ensure that the National Memorial includes the names of all of the victims who died in the Jonestown Massacre.
- (b) EXEMPTION OF PERPETRATORS AND AIDES.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), the National Memorial shall not include the names of—
  - (1) James Warren Jones or any of his aliases; or
  - (2) the names of any of the gunmen who killed Congressman Leo Ryan and his allies.

## **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

The Advisory Council shall be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

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