

Chapter 723

(House Bill 1429)

AN ACT concerning

State Government – Statue of Harriet Tubman

FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor to authorize the gift of a statue of Harriet Tubman to the United States government and to request the United States Congress to place the statue in a certain building; requiring the Governor to establish the Harriet Tubman Statue Commission and appoint certain members; requiring the Commission, under the supervision and direction of the State Treasurer, to raise certain funds and represent the State in selecting a certain sculptor; and generally relating to the statue of Harriet Tubman.

Preamble

WHEREAS, Harriet Tubman was born a slave under the given name Araminta Ross in Maryland in about 1820; and

WHEREAS, Beaten severely as a child, she also suffered a traumatic head injury at the hand of a slave owner early in her life, which caused a lifetime of headaches, seizures, and vision difficulties; and

WHEREAS, In 1849, she fled north to freedom and then immediately returned to Maryland, risking her life to free her family; and

WHEREAS, She joined the Underground Railroad, which was a secret network for free African Americans and white sympathizers who helped runaways escape the South; and

WHEREAS, She became a conductor on the Underground Railroad, risking her life time and time again to return to Maryland and lead slaves to freedom; and

WHEREAS, Known as “the Moses of her people”, she was so successful that furious slaveholders put a huge price on her head; and

WHEREAS, When the Civil War began, she became a Union spy, organizing an espionage network of slaves and freedmen who operated behind Confederate lines; and

WHEREAS, On several occasions, she led military raiding parties and also tended to the Union wounded as an army nurse; and

WHEREAS, After the Civil War, she devoted herself to women's suffrage, the care of orphans and invalids, and the establishment of freedmen's schools in the South; and

WHEREAS, The 100th anniversary of her death occurs on March 10, 2013; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Governor shall:

(a) authorize the gift of a statue of Harriet Tubman from the citizens of Maryland to the United States government;

(b) request the United States Congress to place the statue *in Emancipation Hall* in the U.S. Capitol ~~Building~~ Visitor Center or another appropriate federal property located in Washington, D.C.; and

(c) establish the Harriet Tubman Statue Commission that:

(1) is composed of ten members, appointed by the Governor, who are representatives of the nonprofit organizations and other groups that contributed to the passage of this Act and will contribute to the funds to be used for paying the costs associated with the statue;

(2) under the supervision and direction of the State Treasurer, is responsible for raising private funds to be used for paying the costs associated with the statue, including:

(i) paying the sculptor;

(ii) carving or casting the Harriet Tubman statue;

(iii) creating a pedestal and any desired inscription;

(iv) transporting the Harriet Tubman statue and pedestal to *Emancipation Hall* in the U.S. Capitol ~~Building~~ Visitor Center or another appropriate federal property located in Washington, D.C.;

(v) temporarily erecting the Harriet Tubman statue in the Rotunda of the Capitol for the unveiling ceremony;

(vi) expenses related to the unveiling ceremony; and

(vii) any other expenses that may be incurred by the Harriet Tubman Statue Commission; and

(3) represents the State in selecting the sculptor for the Harriet Tubman statue.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2012.

Approved by the Governor, May 22, 2012.