

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 149

To designate the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter J. McGuire Gravesite located in Pennsauken, New Jersey, as a National Historic Landmark, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2021

Mr. NORCROSS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To designate the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter J. McGuire Gravesite located in Pennsauken, New Jersey, as a National Historic Landmark, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Peter J. McGuire
5 Labor Day Landmark Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Peter J. McGuire joined the Cabinet Mak-
2 ers Union of New York in 1872 and, recognizing the
3 need for one international union of wood workers,
4 called for and led a convention of carpenters and
5 joiners in Chicago in 1881 that formed the Brother-
6 hood of Carpenters and Joiners which became the
7 United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of
8 America in 1888.

9 (2) The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners
10 elected McGuire its first general secretary and re-
11 tained him in that position for twenty years.

12 (3) McGuire was a leader in convincing skept-
13 ical, locally minded union activists around the
14 United States that a national labor federation was
15 not only necessary, but also possible.

16 (4) McGuire co-founded with Samuel Gompers
17 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor
18 Unions and, in 1886, reorganized it into the Amer-
19 ican Federation of Labor.

20 (5) McGuire served variously as the American
21 Federation of Labor secretary and vice president be-
22 tween 1886 and 1900.

23 (6) McGuire successfully led the fight for the
24 eight-hour day in 1890.

1 (7) In 1882, McGuire proposed that “one day
2 in the year be designated as Labor Day”, a proposal
3 that was adopted first by a number of States and
4 then as the first Monday in September by an Act of
5 Congress in 1894.

6 (8) Upon McGuire’s death in 1906, the United
7 Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners commis-
8 sioned from M.C. Lyons and Sons, Camden, and had
9 installed a massive granite multistage headstone on
10 McGuire’s gravesite in the Arlington Cemetery at
11 1629 Cove Road, Pennsauken, New Jersey, inscribed
12 with “P.J. MCGUIRE, BORN JULY 6, 1852
13 DIED FEB. 18, 1906” and “FOUNDER OF U.B.
14 OF C. & J. OF A.”.

15 (9) Beginning in 1906, each year labor leaders,
16 political leaders, families, and working people gather
17 at McGuire’s gravesite on Labor Day to lay wreaths
18 and deliver speeches in tribute to McGuire and his
19 great work.

20 (10) As the anniversary of McGuire’s centennial
21 birthday approached, the organizations he had
22 helped to found decided to install a new memorial a
23 short distance from McGuire’s gravesite, consisting
24 of a central statue of McGuire embraced by a semi-
25 circular colonnade of marble columns.

1 (11) The Peter J. McGuire Memorial, com-
2 pleted in 1952, includes—

3 (A) an outdoor sculpture of McGuire,
4 made of Cherokee Georgia marble, that shows
5 him standing with his left arm against his chest
6 and right arm, elbow bent, at his waist, and
7 dressed in a frock or mourning coat;

8 (B) an inscription carved on front of the
9 base of such sculpture that reads “PETER J.
10 MCGUIRE/JULY 6, 1852/FEBRUARY 18,
11 1906”;

12 (C) a free-standing curvilinear colonnade
13 of six Greek Doric columns, also made of Cher-
14 okee Georgia marble;

15 (D) an inscription on entablature frieze of
16 the colonnade that reads “IN MEMORY OF
17 PETER J. MCGUIRE FOUNDER OF UBC
18 AND FATHER OF LABOR DAY”; and

19 (E) an inscription on the base of the col-
20 onnade that reads “ERECTED BY UNITED
21 BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND
22 JOINERS OF AMERICA 1952”.

23 (12) Several thousand people, many of them or-
24 dinary union members, attended the Peter J.

1 McGuire Memorial dedication ceremony on August
2 9, 1952, which featured as speakers—

3 (A) the president of the New Jersey Fed-
4 eration of Labor;

5 (B) the mayors of Camden and Penn-
6 sauken;

7 (C) General President Hutcheson of the
8 United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners;

9 (D) the president of the American Federa-
10 tion of Labor, William Green;

11 (E) the secretary and treasurer of the
12 American Federation of Labor, George Meany,
13 who later attained national significance himself;
14 and

15 (F) the United States Secretary of Labor,
16 Maurice Tobin.

17 (13) In 1956, when a new postage stamp dedi-
18 cated to American labor was issued on Labor Day,
19 President Dwight Eisenhower held a special cere-
20 mony at the White House in which he met with the
21 family and descendants of McGuire.

22 (14) In 2004, McGuire was admitted to the
23 Labor Hall of Fame of the United States Depart-
24 ment of Labor, which has since been renamed the
25 Hall of Honor.

1 (15) The New Jersey Historic Preservation Of-
2 fice has documented McGuire as a figure of tran-
3 scendent national significance and importance in the
4 labor history of the United States.

5 (16) The landscape characteristics, physical fea-
6 tures, overall layout, and visual appearance of the
7 Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter J. McGuire
8 Gravesite reflect a high degree of overall integrity in
9 terms of location, design, setting, materials, and
10 workmanship.

11 (17) The sculptural representations of labor
12 and union themes associated with McGuire's career
13 as an effective labor leader and organizer that em-
14 bellish the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter J.
15 McGuire Gravesite are intact and well-preserved.

16 (18) National political and labor leaders have
17 made annual pilgrimages to McGuire's gravesite
18 since 1906 and to the Peter J. McGuire Memorial
19 and Peter J. McGuire Gravesite every September on
20 Labor Day or the Friday before Labor Day since
21 1952.

22 (19) Unlike other known properties related to
23 McGuire, the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter
24 J. McGuire Gravesite are the only properties that re-
25 tain both the necessary direct association with

1 McGuire as a person of national stature and the
2 high level of integrity required for listing on the New
3 Jersey Register of Historic Places and National
4 Register of Historic Places.

5 (20) The Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter
6 J. McGuire Gravesite satisfy the criteria for graves
7 of historical figures and properties that have
8 achieved significance within the past 50 years under
9 the following criteria consideration categories of the
10 National Register of Historic Places—

11 (A) category (c), “a grave of a historical
12 figure of outstanding importance as there is no
13 appropriate site or building associated with
14 McGuire’s productive life”; and

15 (B) category (f), “a property primarily
16 commemorative in intent if design, age, tradi-
17 tion, or symbolic value has invested it with its
18 own exceptional significance”.

19 (21) In August 2017, the New Jersey State
20 Historic Preservation Office certified that the Peter
21 J. McGuire Memorial and Peter J. McGuire Grave-
22 site are eligible for listing on the New Jersey Reg-
23 ister of Historic Places and National Register of
24 Historic Places.

1 (e) NO EFFECT ON ACTIONS OF PROPERTY OWN-
2 ERS.—Designation of the Peter J. McGuire Memorial Na-
3 tional Commemorative Site shall not prohibit any actions
4 which may otherwise be taken by any property owners,
5 including the owners of the Peter J. McGuire Memorial
6 National Commemorative Site, with respect to their prop-
7 erty.

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