

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6805

To amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the United States African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 22, 2022

Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mr. MCEACHIN, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the United States African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program, 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 “African-American Bur-  
5 ial Grounds Preservation Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1           (1) during the period beginning in 1619 and  
2 ending in 1865, millions of African Americans  
3 throughout the United States were enslaved;

4           (2) slaveholders often—

5                 (A) controlled where and how deceased  
6 slaves were buried; and

7                 (B) prohibited the burial of slaves on valu-  
8 able land;

9           (3) as a result of the practices described in  
10 paragraph (2), slave burial grounds were often con-  
11 fined to remote areas or marginal property;

12           (4) slave burial grounds—

13                 (A) were rarely documented; and

14                 (B) infrequently appear on historical maps;

15           (5) a lack of accurate information is typical of  
16 African-American cemeteries originating before the  
17 Civil War;

18           (6) following the end of slavery, many African-  
19 American families continued to face restrictions on  
20 where the deceased could be buried;

21           (7) across many areas of the United States,  
22 local laws segregated burial sites by race;

23           (8) African-American burial grounds often  
24 failed to receive the type of maintenance and record-

1 keeping that predominantly White burial grounds  
2 enjoyed;

3 (9) many African-American burial grounds  
4 from before and after the Civil War are in a state  
5 of disrepair or inaccessibility due to overgrowth of  
6 vegetation, crumbling physical structures, and other  
7 challenges;

8 (10) there is no official national record or data-  
9 base for African-American burial ground locations;

10 (11) the location of many African-American  
11 burial sites is unknown;

12 (12) as a result of the issues described in para-  
13 graphs (10) and (11), the family members and de-  
14 scendants of the individuals interred are unable to  
15 visit the burial sites to honor and remember their  
16 ancestors;

17 (13) abandoned African-American burial  
18 grounds are often discovered when construction  
19 projects inadvertently disturb human remains, which  
20 slows or halts completion of the projects;

21 (14) the presence and location of historic Afri-  
22 can-American burial grounds should be recorded;

23 (15) there should be coordinated national,  
24 State, local, and Tribal efforts to preserve and re-  
25 store African-American burial grounds;



“308604. Cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding.

“308605. Private property protection.

1 **“§ 308601. Definitions**

2 “In this chapter:

3 “(1) BURLIAL GROUND.—The term ‘burial  
4 ground’ means any natural or prepared physical lo-  
5 cation, whether originally below, on, or above the  
6 surface of the earth, into which human remains are  
7 deposited as a part of the death rite or ceremony of  
8 a culture.

9 “(2) HISTORIC.—The term ‘historic’, with re-  
10 spect to a property, means a property that can rea-  
11 sonably be considered to date back at least 50 years.

12 “(3) PROGRAM.—The term ‘Program’ means  
13 the United States African-American Burial Grounds  
14 Preservation Program established under section  
15 308602(a).

16 **“§ 308602. United States African-American Burial**  
17 **Grounds Preservation Program**

18 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish  
19 within the Service, in accordance with this chapter, a pro-  
20 gram to be known as the ‘United States African-American  
21 Burial Grounds Preservation Program’.

22 “(b) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—In carrying out the  
23 Program, the Secretary, in consultation with the National  
24 Trust for Historic Preservation and members of the Afri-

1 can-American heritage community, shall develop a pro-  
2 gram for the provision of grants in accordance with section  
3 308603(a).

4 “(c) DONATIONS.—The Secretary may accept mone-  
5 tary donations to further the purposes of this chapter.

6 “(d) CONSENT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNER RE-  
7 QUIRED.—Burial grounds shall only be considered for a  
8 grant under the Program—

9 “(1) with the consent of the property owner;

10 and

11 “(2) at the request of an individual, landowner,  
12 private or nonprofit organization, State, Tribal, or  
13 local government, or other entity.

14 **“§ 308603. Authority to make grants**

15 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make grants  
16 to other Federal agencies, State, local, and Tribal govern-  
17 ments, other public entities, educational institutions, his-  
18 toric preservation groups, and private nonprofit organiza-  
19 tions in accordance with this chapter for—

20 “(1) the identification of historic African-Amer-  
21 ican burial grounds that may qualify for the Pro-  
22 gram;

23 “(2) the preservation and restoration of Afri-  
24 can-American burial grounds;



