

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3370

To designate the area between the intersections of 3rd Street, Southwest and E Street, Southwest and 4th Street, Southwest and E Street, Southwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as “Hidden Figures Way”, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 23, 2018

Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. NELSON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To designate the area between the intersections of 3rd Street, Southwest and E Street, Southwest and 4th Street, Southwest and E Street, Southwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as “Hidden Figures Way”, 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 “Hidden Figures Way
5 Designation Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1 (1) before the development of electronic com-
2 puters, the term “computer” was a job title desig-
3 nating individuals at the National Advisory Com-
4 mittee for Aeronautics (referred to in this section as
5 “NACA”), which would later become the National
6 Aeronautics and Space Administration (referred to
7 in this section as “NASA”), who performed mathe-
8 matical equations and calculations by hand;

9 (2) in 1935, Virginia Tucker received notice of
10 her appointment to Langley Memorial Aeronautical
11 Laboratory and joined 4 other women in the first
12 “computer pool” at the laboratory;

13 (3) by 1942, human computers had become es-
14 sential to operations at NACA, as indicated in a
15 memo dated April of that year which stated that
16 “the engineers admit themselves that the girl com-
17 puters do the work more rapidly and accurately than
18 they could”;

19 (4) over the next 30 years, hundreds of women,
20 mostly with degrees in math or other sciences, would
21 serve as human computers;

22 (5) reading, calculating, and plotting data from
23 tests in the wind tunnels and research divisions at
24 Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory, human
25 computers played an integral role in aeronautical

1 and aerospace research at the laboratory from the
2 mid 1930s into the 1970s;

3 (6) the majority of computing work at the
4 Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory involved
5 reading film, running calculations, and plotting data;

6 (7) the computing work described in paragraph
7 (6) was done by hand, using slide rules, curves,
8 magnifying glasses, and basic calculating machines,
9 like the Marchant or the more popular Friden, which
10 could multiply and calculate square roots;

11 (8) human computers played an integral role
12 during World War II;

13 (9) between 1941 and 1945, employee numbers
14 at Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory in-
15 creased from 940 to 3,220;

16 (10) during the 1940s, the Langley Memorial
17 Aeronautical Laboratory began recruiting African-
18 American women with college degrees to work as
19 computers who were grouped in a segregated section
20 of the laboratory known as the “West Area Com-
21 puters”;

22 (11) despite having degrees, all African-Amer-
23 ican computers were required to take a course in
24 chemistry at Hampton Institute before starting as

1 computers at Langley Memorial Aeronautical Lab-
2 oratory;

3 (12) the first African-American computers did
4 the same work as their White counterparts, but in
5 a period during which segregation was policy across
6 the South and in the armed services, African-Amer-
7 ican computers encountered segregated dining and
8 bathroom facilities and barriers to other professional
9 jobs;

10 (13) Katherine Johnson joined the West Area
11 Computers in 1953, and would go on to join the
12 Space Task Force in 1958, at which she calculated
13 trajectories for the spaceflights of Alan Shepard and
14 John Glenn and synched the lunar lander of Project
15 Apollo with the moon-orbiting command and service
16 module;

17 (14) Dorothy Vaughan served as the head of
18 the segregated West Area Computing Unit at NACA
19 from 1949 until 1958;

20 (15) Mary Winston Jackson spent 2 years
21 working the computing pool at NACA before work-
22 ing for engineer Kazimierz Czarnecki in the 4-foot
23 by 4-foot supersonic pressure tunnel;

24 (16) in 1958, Mary Winston Jackson became
25 the first African-American engineer at NASA;

1 (17) in 1967, Christine Darden began working
2 as a human computer at NASA;

3 (18) frustrated by her lack of promotion after
4 5 years of computing and programming, Christine
5 Darden was transferred to sonic boom research
6 where she would go on to spend 25 years working
7 on sonic boom minimization before being appointed
8 as the director in the Program Management Office
9 of the Aerospace Performing Center in 1999;

10 (19) often overlooked or hidden in history,
11 human computers took pride in their work, enjoyed
12 the challenge the work offered, and proved that
13 women could successfully do the work that was re-
14 quired of their positions; and

15 (20) renaming the street in front of NASA
16 headquarters in the District of Columbia as Hidden
17 Figures Way serves to recognize Virginia Tucker,
18 Katherine Johnson, Dr. Christine Darden, Dorothy
19 Vaughn, Mary Jackson, and all of the human com-
20 puters who have dedicated their lives to honorably
21 serving their country, advancing equality, and con-
22 tributing to the space program of the United States.

23 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF HIDDEN FIGURES WAY.**

24 (a) DESIGNATION OF HIDDEN FIGURES WAY.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The area between the inter-
2 sections of 3rd Street, Southwest and E Street,
3 Southwest and 4th Street, Southwest and E Street,
4 Southwest in Washington, District of Columbia,
5 shall be known and designated as “Hidden Figures
6 Way”.

7 (2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law,
8 map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of
9 the United States to the area referred to in para-
10 graph (1) shall be deemed to be a reference to Hid-
11 den Figures Way.

12 (b) DESIGNATION OF ADDRESS.—

13 (1) DESIGNATION.—The address of 300 E
14 Street, Southwest, Washington, District of Colum-
15 bia, shall be redesignated as “300 Hidden Figures
16 Way”.

17 (2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law,
18 map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of
19 the United States to the address referred to in para-
20 graph (1) shall be deemed to be a reference to 300
21 Hidden Figures Way.

22 (c) SIGNS.—The Administrator of General Services
23 shall construct street signs that shall—

24 (1) contain the phrase “Hidden Figures Way”;

1 (2) be similar in design to the signs used by
2 Washington, District of Columbia, to designate the
3 location of Metro stations; and

4 (3) be placed on—

5 (A) the parcel of property that is closest to
6 Hidden Figures Way; and

7 (B) the intersections of 3rd Street, South-
8 west and E Street, Southwest and 4th Street,
9 Southwest and E Street, Southwest in Wash-
10 ington, District of Columbia.

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