

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1233

To authorize assistance for the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum
and Justice Learning Center.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 11, 2003

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. CORZINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To authorize assistance for the National Great Blacks in
Wax Museum and Justice Learning Center.

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 “National Great Black
5 Americans Commemoration Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Black Americans have served honorably in
9 Congress, in senior executive branch positions, in the

1 law, the judiciary, and other fields, yet their record
2 of service is not well known by the public, is not in-
3 cluded in school history lessons, and is not ade-
4 quately presented in the Nation's museums.

5 (2) The Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc. in
6 Baltimore, Maryland, a nonprofit organization, is
7 the Nation's first wax museum presenting the his-
8 tory of great Black Americans, including those who
9 have served in Congress, in senior executive branch
10 positions, in the law, the judiciary, and other fields,
11 as well as others who have made significant con-
12 tributions to benefit the Nation.

13 (3) The Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc.
14 plans to expand its existing facilities to establish the
15 National Great Blacks in Wax Museum and Justice
16 Learning Center, which is intended to serve as a na-
17 tional museum and center for presentation of wax
18 figures and related interactive educational exhibits
19 portraying the history of great Black Americans.

20 (4) The wax medium has long been recognized
21 as a unique and artistic means to record human his-
22 tory through preservation of the faces and person-
23 ages of people of prominence, and historically, wax
24 exhibits were used to commemorate noted figures in
25 ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, in me-

1 dieval Europe, and in the art of the Italian renais-
2 sance.

3 (5) The Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc. was
4 founded in 1983 by Drs. Elmer and Joanne Martin,
5 2 Baltimore educators who used their personal sav-
6 ings to purchase wax figures, which they displayed
7 in schools, churches, shopping malls, and festivals in
8 the mid-Atlantic region.

9 (6) The goal of the Martins was to test public
10 reaction to the idea of a Black history wax museum
11 and so positive was the response over time that the
12 museum has been heralded by the public and the
13 media as a national treasure.

14 (7) The museum has been the subject of feature
15 stories by CNN, the Wall Street Journal, the Balti-
16 more Sun, the Washington Post, the New York
17 Times, the Chicago Sun Times, the Dallas Morning
18 News, the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, the Afro
19 American Newspaper, Crisis, Essence Magazine, and
20 others.

21 (8) More than 300,000 people from across the
22 Nation visit the museum annually.

23 (9) The new museum will carry on the time
24 honored artistic tradition of the wax medium; in par-
25 ticular, it will recognize the significant value of this

1 medium to commemorate and appreciate great Black
2 Americans whose faces and personages are not wide-
3 ly recognized.

4 (10) The museum will employ the most skilled
5 artisans in the wax medium, use state-of-the-art
6 interactive exhibition technologies, and consult with
7 museum professionals throughout the Nation, and
8 its exhibits will feature the following:

9 (A) Blacks who have served in the Senate
10 and House of Representatives of the United
11 States, including those who represented con-
12 stituencies in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Lou-
13 isiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Caro-
14 lina, and Virginia during the 19th century.

15 (B) Blacks who have served in the judici-
16 ary, in the Department of Justice, as prominent
17 attorneys, in law enforcement, and in the strug-
18 gle for equal rights under the law.

19 (C) Black veterans of various military en-
20 gagements, including the Buffalo Soldiers and
21 Tuskegee Airmen, and the role of Blacks in the
22 settlement of the western United States.

23 (D) Blacks who have served in senior exec-
24 utive branch positions, including members of
25 Presidents' Cabinets, Assistant Secretaries and

1 Deputy Secretaries of Federal agencies, and
2 Presidential advisers.

3 (E) Other Blacks whose accomplishments
4 and contributions to human history during the
5 last millennium and to the Nation through
6 more than 400 years are exemplary, including
7 Black educators, authors, scientists, inventors,
8 athletes, clergy, and civil rights leaders.

9 (11) The museum plans to develop collaborative
10 programs with other museums, serve as a clearing-
11 house for training, technical assistance, and other
12 resources involving use of the wax medium, and
13 sponsor traveling exhibits to provide enriching mu-
14 seum experiences for communities throughout the
15 Nation.

16 (12) The museum has been recognized by the
17 State of Maryland and the city of Baltimore as a
18 preeminent facility for presenting and interpreting
19 Black history, using the wax medium in its highest
20 artistic form.

21 (13) The museum is located in the heart of an
22 area designated as an empowerment zone, and is
23 considered to be a catalyst for economic and cultural
24 improvements in this economically disadvantaged
25 area.

1 **SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE FOR NATIONAL GREAT BLACKS IN WAX**
 2 **MUSEUM AND JUSTICE LEARNING CENTER.**

3 (a) ASSISTANCE FOR MUSEUM.—Subject to sub-
 4 section (b), the Attorney General, acting through the Of-
 5 fice of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice,
 6 shall, from amounts made available under subsection (c),
 7 make a grant to the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc.
 8 in Baltimore, Maryland, to pay the Federal share of the
 9 costs of expanding and creating the National Great Blacks
 10 in Wax Museum and Justice Learning Center, including
 11 the cost of its design, planning, furnishing, and equipping.

12 (b) GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under
 14 subsection (a), the Great Blacks in Wax Museum,
 15 Inc. shall submit to the Attorney General a proposal
 16 for the use of the grant, which shall include detailed
 17 plans for the design, construction, furnishing, and
 18 equipping of the National Great Blacks in Wax Mu-
 19 seum and Justice Learning Center.

20 (2) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of
 21 the costs described in subsection (a) shall not exceed
 22 25 percent.

23 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 24 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 25 \$15,000,000, to remain available until expended.