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SENATE

{ REPORT
{ 110-313

BOB HOPE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

APRIL 10, 2008.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 759]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the Act (H.R. 759) to redesignate the Ellis Island Library on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, located on Ellis Island in New York Harbor, as the “Bob Hope Memorial Library”, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the Act do pass.

PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 759 is to redesignate the Ellis Island Library on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, located on Ellis Island in New York Harbor, as the “Bob Hope Memorial Library.”

BACKGROUND AND NEED

From 1892 to 1954, over twelve million immigrants entered the United States through immigration facilities located on Ellis Island, a small island in New York Harbor. Ellis Island is located in the upper bay just off the New Jersey coast, near the Statue of Liberty. Today, over 40 percent of America’s population can trace their ancestry through Ellis Island.

The main building of the Immigration Station was restored after 30 years of abandonment and opened as a museum in 1990, administered by the National Park Service. The Ellis Island Library is located on the third floor of the museum and houses the historical and ethnological resources collection, including over 1,000 oral histories.

Noted entertainer Bob Hope was born Leslie Townes Hope in England in 1903. His parents emigrated from England to Cleveland in 1908, entering the United States through Ellis Island. Bob Hope's life story exemplifies the story of many who came to this country through Ellis Island, entering the country with little, but who then became successful citizens. Bob Hope died in 2003 at the age of 100.

In recognition of his many decades of work entertaining American troops overseas, Congress enacted Public Law 105–67 in 1997, which conferred on him status as an honorary U.S. Armed Forces Veteran. He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1962, the Medal of Freedom in 1969, and the National Medal of Arts in 1995.

In commemoration of Bob Hope's lifetime achievements as someone who entered the country through Ellis Island, H.R. 759 would redesignate the Ellis Island Library as the "Bob Hope Memorial Library."

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H.R. 759, sponsored by Congressman Engel and others, passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 420–1 on March 20, 2007. There is no Senate companion measure. During the 109th Congress, the House of Representatives passed a similar measure, H.R. 323. The Senate did not take any action on that bill.

The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on H.R. 759 on September 11, 2007. (S. Hrg. 110–213.) At its business meeting on January 30, 2008, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered H.R. 759 favorably reported without amendment.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on January 30, 2008, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass H.R. 759.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 provides that the Ellis Island Library, located on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum on Ellis Island, shall be known and redesignated as the "Bob Hope Memorial Library."

Section 2 states that any legal reference to the Ellis Island Library shall be deemed to be a reference to the Bob Hope Memorial Library.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

H.R. 759—An act to redesignate the Ellis Island Library on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, located on Ellis Island in New York Harbor, as the "Bob Hope Memorial Library"

H.R. 759 would redesignate the Ellis Island Library in New York as the Bob Hope Memorial Library. CBO estimates that implementing this legislation would have no significant effect on the op-

erating budget of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, which is administered by the National Park Service (NPS). We expect that one-time costs to revise NPS brochures, maps, and signs would be minimal because most such revisions would take place in conjunction with scheduled reprinting and other routine maintenance. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 759 would not affect revenues or direct spending.

H.R. 759 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out H.R. 759. The Act is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of H.R. 759, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

H.R. 759, as reported, does not contain any congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The testimony provided by the National Park Service at the September 11, 2007 subcommittee hearing on H.R. 759 follows:

STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 759, a bill to redesignate the Ellis Island library on the third floor of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum as the Bob Hope Memorial Library.

The National Park Service believes there should be a strong association between the park and the person being commemorated, and that at least five years should have elapsed since the death of the person. This basic principle is reflected in our National Park Service Management Policies. Therefore, the Department cannot support this bill. On May 12, 2005, the Department also testified that we could not support H.R. 323, an identical bill from the 109th Congress.

A unique repository of resources in history, ethnology, and sociology is located on the third floor of the Immigra-

tion Museum on Ellis Island. The space has been reconfigured to provide a reading room, a preschool children's reading center, an archive for controlled storage of valuable paper artifacts, and a room designed to provide retrieval access to the library's collection of more than 1,000 oral histories. It is a resource devoted to the American immigration experience and the stories of those who came to America with hopes and dreams for a better life. The library provides important lessons to our citizens of the meaning of liberty and opportunity in the history of our nation.

Although Bob Hope's life story exemplifies the experience of many who came to the United States with little, rose to the heights of their professions, and gave back in abundance to their adopted nation, the Department cannot support H.R. 759. Bob Hope did enter the United States through Ellis Island, as did many other great Americans; however, there is no compelling connection between his life and the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

Bob Hope was born Leslie Townes Hope, the son of stonemason William Henry Hope and Avis Townes Hope. The family emigrated from England to Cleveland, Ohio in 1908, when Leslie, one of seven children, was not yet five years old. In Cleveland, the Hope family struggled financially, as they had in England. Mrs. Hope took in boarders to supplement her husband's erratic income. She gave singing lessons to Leslie, who entertained his family with song, impersonations, and dancing. When he left school at age 16, Leslie worked at a number of part-time jobs. He boxed for a short time under the name of "Packy East" but later changed his name to Lester Hope. His interest in entertainment and show business led him to take dancing lessons and to seek employment as a variety stage entertainer. Not until he had achieved considerable success on the stage did he begin using the name, "Bob Hope."

Bob Hope's more than fifty-year commitment to public service has made him one of the most honored and esteemed performers in history. His charitable work and tours on behalf of the armed forces brought him the admiration and gratitude of millions and the friendship of every President of the United States since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

National Park Service Management Policies 2006 states that the National Park Service will discourage and curtail commemorative works, especially commemorative naming, except when Congress specifically authorizes them or there is a compelling justification for the recognition, and the commemorative work is the best way to express the association between the park and the person, group, event, or other subject being commemorated. While Bob Hope had a distinguished career, we do not believe there is sufficient association between him and the Ellis Island Library to merit renaming the library.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement and I will be happy to answer any questions that members of the committee may have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the Act H.R. 759, as ordered reported.

