

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2309

To amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 19, 2015

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. Civil Rights Network, 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 “U.S. Civil Rights Net-
5 work Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

1 (1) the African American civil rights movement
2 includes historic events, court decisions, and legisla-
3 tion, the goals of which were—

4 (A) to end segregation based on race;

5 (B) to end discrimination against African
6 Americans; and

7 (C) to ensure that African American citi-
8 zens could exercise their basic constitutional
9 rights, including the right to vote;

10 (2) the civil rights movement—

11 (A) helped bridge the divides of race, reli-
12 gion, sectional differences, and nationality;

13 (B) spanned State lines; and

14 (C) joined the ideals of liberty and freedom
15 expressed in the Declaration of Independence,
16 the Constitution, and the Civil Rights Act of
17 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.) to the extraor-
18 dinary actions of ordinary men and women
19 working in common purpose for equal rights;

20 (3) the National Park Service and Organization
21 of American Historians conducted a theme study
22 that identified and interpreted sites related to the
23 Civil Rights movement in accordance with the Na-
24 tional Park Service Studies Act of 1999 (as enacted

1 in title III of Appendix C of Public Law 106–113;
2 113 Stat. 1501A–194);

3 (4) in conducting the theme study referred to in
4 paragraph (3), the National Park Service and Orga-
5 nization of American Historians found that—

6 (A) although many sites relating to the Af-
7 rican American civil rights movement have been
8 identified and recognized in existing National
9 Park System units—

10 (i) a number of sites relating to the
11 African American civil rights movement
12 have not been recognized;

13 (ii) many sites relating to the African
14 American civil rights movement are in im-
15 minent danger of being lost or destroyed;
16 and

17 (iii) many important resource types
18 relating to the African American civil
19 rights movement are not adequately rep-
20 resented and protected;

21 (B) there are many important sites relat-
22 ing to the African American civil rights move-
23 ment that have high potential for preservation
24 and visitor use in a number of States, the Dis-

1 trict of Columbia, and territories of the United
2 States;

3 (C) no single site completely reflects and
4 characterizes the African American civil rights
5 movement, since the story of, and resources as-
6 sociated with, the African American civil rights
7 movement involve networks, regions, and terri-
8 tories of the United States rather than indi-
9 vidual sites; and

10 (D) the establishment of a variety of part-
11 nerships among the Federal Government, State,
12 and units of local government, and the private
13 sector would be most appropriate for the pro-
14 tection, restoration, and interpretation of the
15 U.S. Civil Rights Network;

16 (5) the National Park Service can play a vital
17 role in facilitating the creation and sustained success
18 of the U.S. Civil Rights Network; and

19 (6) the story and significance of the African
20 American civil rights movement can best engage the
21 people of the United States through a national pro-
22 gram of the National Park Service that links, in a
23 unified and flexible manner—

1 (A) historic buildings, structures, and sites
2 relating to the African American civil rights
3 movement;

4 (B) geographic areas relating to the Afri-
5 can American civil rights movement;

6 (C) interpretive centers, museums, and in-
7 stitutions relating to the African American civil
8 rights movement; and

9 (D) programs, activities, community
10 projects, exhibits, and multimedia materials re-
11 lating to the African American civil rights
12 movement.

13 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

14 (1) to recognize—

15 (A) the importance of the African Amer-
16 ican civil rights movement; and

17 (B) the sacrifices made by the people who
18 fought against discrimination and segregation;
19 and

20 (2) to authorize the National Park Service to
21 coordinate and facilitate Federal and non-Federal
22 activities to commemorate, honor, and interpret—

23 (A) the history of the African American
24 civil rights movement;

1 (B) the significance of the civil rights
 2 movement as a crucial element in the evolution
 3 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C.
 4 2000a et seq.); and

5 (C) the relevance of the African American
 6 civil rights movement in fostering the spirit of
 7 social justice and national reconciliation.

8 **SEC. 3. U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK PROGRAM.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subdivision 1 of Division B of
 10 subtitle III of title 54, United States Code, is amended
 11 by inserting after chapter 3083 the following:

12 **“CHAPTER 3084—U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS**
 13 **NETWORK**

14 **“§ 308401. Definition of Network**

15 “In this chapter, the term ‘Network’ means the U.S.
 16 Civil Rights Network established under section 308402(a).

17 **“§ 308402. U.S. Civil Rights Network**

18 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish,
 19 within the Service, a program to be known as the ‘U.S.
 20 Civil Rights Network’.

21 “(b) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—In carrying out the
 22 Network, the Secretary shall—

23 “(1) review studies and reports to complement
 24 and not duplicate studies of the historical impor-
 25 tance of the African American civil rights movement

1 that may be underway or completed, such as the
2 Civil Rights Framework Study;

3 “(2) produce and disseminate appropriate edu-
4 cational materials relating to the African American
5 civil rights movement, such as handbooks, maps, in-
6 terpretive guides, or electronic information;

7 “(3) enter into appropriate cooperative agree-
8 ments and memoranda of understanding to provide
9 technical assistance under subsection (c); and

10 “(4)(A) create and adopt an official, uniform
11 symbol or device for the Network; and

12 “(B) issue regulations for the use of the symbol
13 or device adopted under subparagraph (A).

14 “(c) ELEMENTS.—The Network shall encompass the
15 following elements:

16 “(1) All units and programs of the Service that
17 are determined by the Secretary to relate to the Af-
18 rican American civil rights movement during the pe-
19 riod from 1939 through 1968.

20 “(2) Other Federal, State, local, and privately
21 owned properties that—

22 “(A) relate to the African American civil
23 rights movement;

24 “(B) have a verifiable connection to the
25 African American civil rights movement; and

1 “(C) are included in, or determined by the
 2 Secretary to be eligible for inclusion in, the Na-
 3 tional Register of Historic Places.

4 “(3) Other governmental and nongovernmental
 5 facilities and programs of an educational, research,
 6 or interpretive nature that are directly related to the
 7 African American civil rights movement.

8 **“§ 308403. Cooperative agreements and memoranda**
 9 **of understanding**

10 “To achieve the purposes of this chapter and to en-
 11 sure effective coordination of the Federal and non-Federal
 12 elements of the Network described in section 308402(c)
 13 with System units and programs of the Service, the Sec-
 14 retary may enter into cooperative agreements and memo-
 15 randa of understanding with, and provide technical assist-
 16 ance to the heads of other Federal agencies, States, units
 17 of local government, regional governmental bodies, and
 18 private entities.”.

19 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters
 20 for title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting
 21 after the item relating to chapter 3083 the following:

“3084. U.S. Civil Rights Network.”.

