

TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY TO DETERMINE THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING THE BIRTHPLACE OF JAMES WELDON JOHNSON IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, AS A UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

APRIL 24, 2018.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. BISHOP of Utah, from the Committee on Natural Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 5005]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 5005) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 5005 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

James Weldon Johnson was born in 1871 in the LaVilla neighborhood at 120 Lee Street in Jacksonville, Florida. The birth home no longer exists and there are no structures on the property.¹ However, the lot was designated by the City of Jacksonville as “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing Park” in June 2015.²

¹ Patton, Charlie. “Jacksonville native left a huge legacy, but nothing marks it.” *The Florida Times*. June 15, 2012. Accessed February 23, 2018. <http://www.jacksonville.com/article/20120615/ENTERTAINMENT/801251861>.

² McIntyre, Mary. “Jacksonville To Dedicate ‘Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing’ Park.” *WJCT NEWS*. June 15, 2015. Accessed February 23, 2018. <http://news.wjct.org/post/jacksonville-dedicate-lift-ev-ry-voice-and-sing-park>.

James Weldon Johnson was accomplished in several fields: a renowned statesman, educator, songwriter, author, lawyer, and civil rights activist. He served as the principal at Stanton Grade School in Jacksonville, and in 1898, became the first African American admitted to the Florida Bar.³

After moving to New York City at the turn of the century, he found success writing songs for Broadway shows with his brother. In addition, Johnson wrote poetry and fiction, and published anthologies contributing to the Harlem Renaissance. He wrote the song “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” which is often referred to as the “Black National Anthem.”⁴

Beginning in 1916, he worked for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in various roles, ultimately serving as Executive Secretary. He expanded the organization in the Southern States and campaigned against lynching and segregation.⁵

Johnson served as the U.S. consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua under President Roosevelt. He was the first African American professor at New York University, where he taught courses in literature and culture. He also taught at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.⁶

Johnson’s New York City residence (187 West 135th Street), which he occupied from 1925 until his death in 1938, was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1976, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.⁷

H.R. 5005 directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of James Weldon Johnson’s birthplace in Jacksonville, Florida, to determine the national significance of the site and its suitability for inclusion as a unit of the National Park System.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 5005 was introduced on February 13, 2018, by Congressman Al Lawson, Jr. (D–FL). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands. On February 28, 2018, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the legislation. On April 11, 2018, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered and the bill was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on

³“James Weldon Johnson.” Biography.com. April 02, 2014. Accessed February 23, 2018. <https://www.biography.com/people/james-weldon-johnson-9356013>.

⁴“Lift Every Voice and Sing.” PBS. Accessed February 23, 2018. <http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/black-authors-spoken-word-poetry/lift-every-voice-and-sing/>.

⁵“NAACP History: James Weldon Johnson.” NAACP. Accessed February 23, 2018. <http://www.naacp.org/oldest-and-boldest/naacp-history-james-weldon-johnson/>.

⁶Ibid.

⁷“National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form—James Weldon Johnson Residence” NPS.gov, accessed February 23, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/14000527.pdf>.

Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET
ACT

1. Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act. With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 18, 2018.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
*Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 5005, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Janani Shankaran.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 5005—A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System

H.R. 5005 would direct the National Park Service to study the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System.

Based on the costs of similar studies, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 5005 would cost less than \$500,000; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Enacting H.R. 5005 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 5005 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

H.R. 5005 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Janani Shankaran. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

2. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a

special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

COMPLIANCE WITH H. RES. 5

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169) as relating to other programs.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill is not intended to preempt any State, local or tribal law.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes to existing law.