

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3196

AN ACT

To designate the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope as the
“Vera C. Rubin Observatory”.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Vera C. Rubin Observ-
3 atory Designation Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Dr. Vera Rubin was born July 23, 1928, to
7 Philip and Rose Applebaum Cooper.

8 (2) Dr. Rubin pursued her graduate studies at
9 Cornell University and Georgetown University, earn-
10 ing her Ph.D. in Physics in 1954.

11 (3) Dr. Rubin’s Ph.D. thesis on galaxy motions
12 provided supporting evidence that galaxies are not
13 uniformly distributed, but exist in clusters.

14 (4) Dr. Rubin continued to study the motions
15 of galaxies, first as research associate and assistant
16 professor at Georgetown University, and then as a
17 member of the staff at the Carnegie Institution of
18 Washington Department of Terrestrial Magnetism.

19 (5) Dr. Rubin faced barriers throughout her ca-
20 reer because of her gender.

21 (6) For instance, one of the world’s leading as-
22 tronomy facilities at the time, the Palomar Observ-
23 atory, did not permit women. Dr. Rubin persisted
24 and was finally allowed to observe at Palomar in
25 1965, the first woman officially allowed to do so.

1 (7) In 1970, Dr. Rubin published measure-
2 ments of the Andromeda galaxy showing stars and
3 gas orbiting the galaxy’s center too fast to be ex-
4 plained by the amount of mass associated with the
5 light output of the stars.

6 (8) In the years that followed, Dr. Rubin and
7 her collaborators used their observations, in conjunc-
8 tion with the work by earlier astronomers on the ro-
9 tation of stars in spiral galaxies, to provide some of
10 the best evidence for the existence of dark matter.

11 (9) This work contributed to a major shift in
12 the conventional view of the universe, from one
13 dominated by ordinary matter such as what pro-
14 duces the light of stars, to one dominated by dark
15 matter.

16 (10) Dr. Rubin was elected to the National
17 Academy of Sciences in 1981, the second woman as-
18 tronomer to be so honored.

19 (11) Dr. Rubin was awarded the President’s
20 National Medal of Science in 1993 “for her pio-
21 neering research programs in observational cos-
22 mology which demonstrated that much of the matter
23 in the universe is dark, and for significant contribu-
24 tions to the realization that the universe is more

1 complex and more mysterious than had been imag-
2 ined”.

3 (12) Dr. Rubin was an outspoken advocate for
4 the equal treatment and representation of women in
5 science, and she served as a mentor, supporter, and
6 role model to many women astronomers throughout
7 her life.

8 (13) The Large Synoptic Survey Telescope,
9 funded jointly by the National Science Foundation
10 and the Department of Energy, will honor the legacy
11 of Dr. Rubin and her colleagues to probe the nature
12 of dark matter by mapping and cataloging billions of
13 galaxies through space and time.

14 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.**

15 The Large Synoptic Survey Telescope shall be known
16 and designated as the “Vera C. Rubin Observatory”.

17 **SEC. 4. REFERENCES.**

18 Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document,
19 paper, or other record of the United States to the facility

1 described in section 3 shall be deemed to be a reference
2 to the “Vera C. Rubin Observatory”.

Passed the House of Representatives July 23, 2019.

Attest:

Clerk.

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