

their communities, and for this country—thank you. Thank you for making this country work. Thank you for building this country as we know it.

Help is on the way. Help is on the way in this bill, which I hope will become law tonight. But there is much more to do, and I, for one, stand ready to work to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

U.S. AFRICAN-AMERICAN BURIAL GROUNDS NETWORK ACT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss S. 2827, the African-American Burial Grounds Network Act, introduced by Senator ALEXANDER from Tennessee and me.

We know that for too long and in too many parts of our country, Black families were blocked from burying their loved ones in White cemeteries. These men and women were freed slaves, civil rights champions, veterans, mothers, fathers, and active workers in communities.

Our bill is simple. It directs the National Park Service to conduct a study on ways to identify and preserve and record unmarked, abandoned, or other historic African-American burial grounds.

We need to act now before these sites are lost to the ravages of time or development.

In an op-ed published in the Memphis Commercial Appeal, Senator ALEXANDER summed up the need for bills like ours: “Our children need to learn more history in order to grow up knowing what it means to be an American, including our struggle with race.”

For more than two centuries, these cemeteries have been looked after by churches, community groups, and private citizens. I learned about these efforts and the struggle to preserve these sacred places when I visited Union Baptist Church in Cincinnati, where parishioners have worked to preserve their hallowed space from vandals and the inexorable passage of time.

The cemetery I visited in Cincinnati was founded in 1864. It is a final resting place for freed slaves, for Black Union soldiers, and for civil rights activists.

I was there last November on a very cold morning, I remember, with Ms. Angelita Jones, chair of the trustee board for Union Baptist Church, and other elected officials in the city and members of the church, to announce funding to help restore the cemetery. But there is more to do at this cemetery and so many more like it across the country.

Our bill will help us better understand the scope and the scale of the issue and develop the tools needed to help churches, historic organizations, and communities to protect these sacred burial grounds.

I would like to take a minute, as we move this legislation forward—and I appreciate the cooperation of the peo-

ple on all sides—to thank Senator ALEXANDER for his help with this bill. In fact, almost 3 years ago to the day—it was almost exactly this day; I believe it was December 21, 2017—our bill to create an African American Civil Rights Network passed this Chamber. His interest in and awareness of protecting and preserving our history and the contributions to it by all Americans are so important.

He has been a champion for so many issues that I have had the pleasure to work with him on over the years, from protecting the Smokey Mountains to STEM education, to helping me find funding for cleanup efforts at a former uranium enrichment plant in Southern Ohio. His willingness to work across the aisle and to work in good faith for an agreeable compromise will surely be missed. We all regret his retirement and thank him for amazing service.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 2827 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2827) to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. African-American Burial Grounds Network, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Brown substitute amendment be agreed to and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2721) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “African American Burial Grounds Study Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BURIAL GROUND.—The term “burial ground” means any natural or prepared physical location, whether originally below, on, or above the surface of the earth, into which human remains are deposited as a part of the death rite or ceremony of a culture.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUNDS STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a study of ways to identify, interpret, preserve, and record unmarked, previously abandoned, underserved, or other burial grounds relating to the historic African American experience.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider—

(1) ways to engage with descendant, local, and other communities historically associated with identified burial grounds by geography, genealogy, or culture;

(2) appropriate processes to identify locations of unmarked and unrecorded African American burial grounds with appropriate consideration for the privacy and safety of the burial grounds;

(3) alternatives for providing in a public database, as appropriate, the locations of, and information on, recorded and unrecorded African American burial grounds;

(4) alternatives for commemorating and interpreting African American burial grounds; and

(5) best practices for preserving burial ground landscapes and caring for artifacts.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing—

(1) the findings of the study; and

(2) any recommendations of the Secretary.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 2827), as amended, was passed.

Mr. BROWN. I ask unanimous consent that the title amendment be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The title amendment (No. 2722) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of African American burial grounds, and for other purposes.”

Mr. BROWN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON NOLAND NOMINATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Shall the Senate advise and consent to the Noland nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.