

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2026

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

As you begin work on the Subcommittee's Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectfully request you direct \$350,000 to the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing a African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument in New York, NY. We also respectfully request that at least \$15 million be provided for the National Park Service construction account for the planning, design, and construction of this museum expansion at the African Burial Ground National Monument.

New York City is home to the earliest and largest African Burial Ground in the United States. In 1991, as construction began for a 34-story federal office tower began, archeologists complying with Section 106 in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 found 15,000 intact skeletal remains of enslaved and free Africans who lived in worked in colonial New York 30 feet below the city's street level. In addition, they found nearly 8,000 personal handwritten messages from the living to the African ancestors were also buried with the remains. This find was one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century and an enduring testament to the history of African Americans who not only built this city but also built this country.

In February 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed this African Burial Ground as a national monument. On October 5, 2007, the African Burial Ground National Monument became the first National Monument dedicated to Africans of early New York and Americans of African descent. While the monument provides public programming and a space to honor this sacred and significant piece of history, it currently lacks a museum and education center capable of fully presenting the archaeological findings and cultural legacy associated with the site.

This request supports the establishment of the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center as an expansion of the existing monument. Funding is requested to allow the National Park Service to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study evaluating potential locations, availability, and cost of collections, capital construction requirements, property acquisition needs, and long-term operations and maintenance costs. The National Park Service would then provide its findings to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Natural Resources. In addition, this request includes \$15,000,000 within the National Park Service Construction account for the planning, design, and construction of a museum and education center expansion at African Burial Ground National Monument.

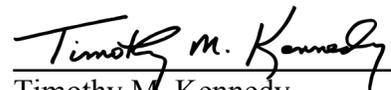
The African Burial Ground is an important part of New York City's history, serving as a permanent tribute to the enslaved and free African men and women who lived in and helped build the foundations of New York. Establishing a permanent museum would ensure that our city and nation never forget the important historic contributions that people of African descent have made to the establishment of New York City and the United States of America.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress