



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1116

Resolution commending the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture for its efforts in preserving materials documenting the experiences of people of African descent throughout the world and urging the New York Public Library to maintain the Schomburg Center as one of the preeminent research libraries in the City of New York.

By Council Members Dickens, Brewer, Felder, Fidler, Foster, Gentile, Gerson, James, Liu, Mark-Viverito, Nelson, Recchia Jr., Sanders Jr., Weprin and Jackson

Whereas, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (the “Schomburg Center”) is a national research library devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the experiences of people of African descent throughout the world; and

Whereas, The origins of the Schomburg Center date back to 1926 when the personal collection of materials of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, a distinguished black scholar and bibliophile born in Puerto Rico, received international acclaim and was added to the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library (the “NYPL”); and

Whereas, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg served as curator of the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints from 1932 until his death in 1938, and in 1940, the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints was renamed in his honor; and

Whereas, In 1972, the Schomburg Center was designated as a research library of the NYPL; and

Whereas, Currently, according to Dr. Howard Dodson, Executive Director of the Schomburg Center, the Schomburg Center contains over 10 million items and provides services and programs for interested individuals from New York City, the United States and abroad; and

Whereas, The Schomburg Center is one of the world’s leading research facilities devoted to the

preservation of materials from the global African and the African diaspora experiences; and

Whereas, National and international entities such as the U.S. General Services Administration, the National Parks Service, the Congressional Black Caucus, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the African Union and African and Caribbean nation states have turned to the Schomburg Center for guidance with respect to research regarding the global African and African diaspora experiences; and

Whereas, According to a study conducted for the NYPL, the Schomburg Center was consistently rated the highest or close to the highest of the NYPL research libraries by patrons on ease of use, success in receiving materials, and overall quality of encounters with staff, as well as in knowledge, courteousness and clarity of explanations provided; and

Whereas, The Schomburg Center is a focal point of Harlem's cultural life and a major cultural tourism attraction and economic resource for New York City; and

Whereas, The NYPL's system of four research centers, including the Schomburg Center, and the large network of neighborhood branch libraries has been extremely successful in meeting both the research and book borrowing needs of the public, and have helped make the NYPL unique from other libraries nationwide and worldwide; and

Whereas, Maintaining the distinction between research centers and branch libraries is imperative in preserving the Schomburg Center as a preeminent research library; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commends the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture for its efforts in preserving materials documenting the experiences of people of African descent throughout the world and urges the New York Public Library to maintain the Schomburg Center as one of the preeminent research libraries in the City of New York.

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