



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0604-2002, Version: A

Proposed Res. No. 604-A

Resolution honoring the memory of over 400 Colonial Era remains of Africans uncovered during 1991 in Lower Manhattan, and calling upon the United States General Services Administration to immediately re-inter the remains of the 427 Africans that were unearthed and to construct a museum and memorial plaque to honor the historic and vitally important African Burial Ground.

By Council Members Barron, Lopez, Boyland, Clarke, Comrie, Davis, Dilan, Foster, Gennaro, Gerson, Jackson, Liu, Nelson, Quinn, Recchia, Reed, Rivera, Sanders, Serrano, Stewart, Vann, Weprin, Brewer, Jennings and Gonzalez, Seabrook and Lanza; also Council Member Koppell

Whereas, Throughout the brief yet turbulent history of this nation, perhaps no group has suffered harder or been exposed to indignities and reversals longer than people of African descent; and
Whereas, The institution of slavery and the monstrous injustice committed upon men, women and children of African descent represented a period of profound moral crisis in our nation, and was one of the bleakest periods in our history; and
Whereas, During a renovation of New York's City Hall Park in 1991, our dark past was suddenly and most emphatically given voice when the remains of 427 Africans were unearthed beneath a parking lot just two blocks north of City Hall; and
Whereas, This site is of great archeological, historical and spiritual significance; and
Whereas, These Colonial Era remains are a vital and invaluable part of many African-Americans' ancestral history, and are a provocative and powerful reminder that New York once had a slave population second only to that of Charleston, South Carolina; and
Whereas, These remains also provide a compelling and unassailable legacy, linking men, women and children intimately and immediately with the past with their ancestors, and providing all with a renewed sense of clarity and moral outrage; and
Whereas, It has taken over 200 years for this burial site to yield its secrets and remind us that Africans, free and enslaved, have played a significant role in New York's history since Manhattan first was settled in the seventeenth century; and
Whereas, It is our moral imperative to ensure that this important archeological find is neither lost nor forgotten; and
Whereas, Our nation has a responsibility to preserve as much of its history as possible, in part, so that future generations might be able to learn from past mistakes, now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the memory of over 400 Colonial Era remains of Africans uncovered during 1991 in Lower Manhattan, and calls upon the United States General Services Administration to immediately re-inter the remains of the 427 Africans that were unearthed and to construct a museum and memorial plaque to honor the historic and vitally important African Burial Ground.

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