



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0694-2011, **Version:** *

Res. No. 694

Resolution that celebrates “Harriet Tubman Day” on March 10, 2011, and supports Senate Bill S.247, sponsored by U.S. Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), that would create two national historic park sites in New York and Maryland, in honor of Harriet Tubman, who escaped slavery to become the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad.

By Council Members Vann, Brewer, Cabrera, Chin, Comrie, Dickens, Dromm, Fidler, James, Koppell, Lander, Mealy, Mendez, Nelson, Rose, Van Bramer, Williams, Wills, Eugene, Koslowitz, Levin and Halloran

Whereas, Harriet Tubman, a renowned African-American abolitionist, humanitarian and civil rights pioneer, escaped slavery to become the most famous “conductor” of the anti-slavery resistance network known as the Underground Railroad; and

Whereas, Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester County, Maryland in 1822, where she spent nearly 30 years as a slave; and

Whereas, Harriet Tubman escaped slavery in 1849, she repeatedly returned for more than 10 years to Dorchester and Caroline Counties where she led hundreds of African-Americans to freedom; and

Whereas, In 1857, Harriet Tubman relocated her parents from St. Catharines, Ontario to Auburn, New York, where she purchased land and eventually died on March 10, 1913; and

Whereas, “Harriet Tubman Day” will be held on March 10, 2011 to commemorate the anniversary of her death; and

Whereas, “Harriet Tubman Day,” was established by New York State law in 2003, and occurs annually on March 10th in recognition of her remarkable life, outstanding leadership and as a prominent New York resident; and

Whereas, In addition to helping to free slaves on the Underground Railroad, she made several major

contributions throughout her life; and

Whereas, During the American Civil War, Harriet Tubman worked for the Union Army, first as a cook and a nurse, and then as an armed scout and spy; and

Whereas, She guided the Combahee River Raid in South Carolina, liberating more than 700 slaves, and making her the first black woman to lead an armed expedition in the war; and

Whereas, After the war, she returned to Auburn, New York, to care for her aging parents in their family home, and later founded a home for elderly African-Americans; and

Whereas, After her death, she was buried in Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn with military honors, and she has received several other honors since that time; and

Whereas, In 1944, the United States Maritime Commission launched the SS Harriet Tubman, its first Liberty ship ever named for a black woman, and the United States Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor in 1978; and

Whereas, On February 1, 2011, U.S. Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), introduced legislation, S.247, which would establish the Harriet Tubman National Historic Park in Auburn, New York, and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Historical Park Act in Maryland; and

Whereas, The National Parks Service endorsed Senate Bill S.247 determining through a multi-year study that Auburn is a suitable location for a national park to preserve and promote the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman; and

Whereas, A national park will provide an important place where Americans of all backgrounds can come together and reflect on the significance of Harriet Tubman's life; and

Whereas, The Harriet Tubman Historical Park in Auburn, New York would include important historical sites such as Tubman's home, the Home for the Aged that she established, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where she was an active member, and the Fort Hill Cemetery where she was buried; and

Whereas, Senate Bill S.247 will provide a significant boost to the regional tourism industry in Auburn, New York and provide funds for the development and construction of interpretive historical materials to help visitors understand Harriet Tubman’s contribution to Central New York and the United States as a whole; and

Whereas, The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act in Maryland will trace her life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she was one of the leaders of the Underground Railroad and include nearly 5,700 acres of historic land and sites, including the Poplar Neck Plantation that she escaped from in 1849, a memorial garden and walking paths; and

Whereas, Harriet Tubman is a remarkable American hero whose unwavering commitment to helping others while risking her own life in the struggle for equality continues to inspire today’s leaders and generations of Americans; and

Whereas, Harriet Tubman is a historic figure who lived a courageous life so that all Americans, including African-Americans and women, would have equal rights, thus, it is very important that these national historic parks be established to preserve her legacy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York celebrates “Harriet Tubman Day” on March 10, 2011, and supports Senate Bill S.247, sponsored by U.S. Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), that would create two national historic park sites in New York and Maryland, in honor of Harriet Tubman, who escaped slavery to become the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad.

LS #2084
2/22/11
12:49 p.m.
TC