

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7549

To establish a National Council on African American History and Culture within the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Mr. MFUME (for himself, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. IVEY, Ms. SIMON, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. BROWN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. BELL, Mr. CARSON, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. TITUS, Mr. OLSZEWSKI, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. POCAN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mrs. MCBATH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To establish a National Council on African American History and Culture within the National Endowment for the Humanities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Council on
5 African American History and Culture Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. COUNCIL ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND**
2 **CULTURE.**

3 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the
4 National Endowment for the Humanities a National
5 Council on African American History and Culture (re-
6 ferred to in this section as the “Council”).

7 (b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

8 (1) **NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.**—The Council
9 shall be composed of 12 members appointed by the
10 President, by and with the advice and consent of the
11 Senate.

12 (2) **QUALIFICATIONS.**—The members of the
13 Council shall be individuals who—

14 (A) are selected from among private citi-
15 zens of the United States who are recognized
16 for their broad knowledge of, expertise in, or
17 commitment to the preservation and celebration
18 of African American history and culture;

19 (B) are not currently employees of the
20 Federal Government; and

21 (C) have established records of distin-
22 guished service, scholarship, or creativity.

23 (3) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—In appointing members
24 to the Council under paragraph (1), the President—

25 (A) shall give due regard to equitable rep-
26 resentation of women, people of color, and indi-

1 individuals with disabilities who are involved in the
2 humanities;

3 (B) shall select such members in a manner
4 that ensures a comprehensive representation of
5 the views of scholars and professional practi-
6 tioners in the humanities and of the public
7 throughout the United States; and

8 (C) shall ensure that six members are indi-
9 viduals affiliated with the Democratic party and
10 six members are individuals affiliated with the
11 Republican party.

12 (4) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson and
14 Vice Chairperson of the Council shall be des-
15 ignated by the President from among the mem-
16 bers of the Council. The Vice Chairperson shall
17 act as Chairperson in the absence of the Chair-
18 person.

19 (B) PARTY AFFILIATION.—The Chair-
20 person and Vice Chairperson may not be affili-
21 ated with the same political party.

22 (5) TERM OF OFFICE; VACANCIES; REAPPOINT-
23 MENT.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each member shall be
2 appointed for a term of five years, except as
3 provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C).

4 (B) TERMS OF INITIAL APPOINTEES.—As
5 designated by the President at the time of the
6 appointment, of the members first appointed to
7 the Council under paragraph (1)—

8 (i) six shall be appointed for terms of
9 three years, three of whom shall be individ-
10 uals affiliated with the Democratic party
11 and three of whom shall be individuals af-
12 filiated with the Republican party; and

13 (ii) six shall be appointed for terms of
14 five years, three of whom shall be individ-
15 uals affiliated with the Democratic party
16 and three of whom shall be individuals af-
17 filiated with the Republican party.

18 (C) VACANCIES.—Any member appointed
19 to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration
20 of the term for which the member's predecessor
21 was appointed shall be appointed only for the
22 remainder of that term. A member may serve
23 after the expiration of that member's term until
24 a successor has taken office.

1 (D) REAPPOINTMENT.—No member shall
2 be eligible for reappointment during the two-
3 year period following the expiration of such
4 member's term.

5 (6) BASIC PAY.—

6 (A) RATES OF PAY.—Members shall re-
7 ceive compensation at a rate of 50 percent of
8 the daily rate of the highest rate of basic pay
9 payable for the senior-level positions classified
10 above GS–15 pursuant to section 5108 of title
11 5, United States Code, for each day (including
12 travel time) during which they are engaged in
13 the actual performance of duties vested in the
14 Council.

15 (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member
16 shall receive travel expenses, including per diem
17 in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with appli-
18 cable provisions under subchapter 1 of chapter
19 57 of title 5, United States Code.

20 (7) QUORUM.—Nine members of the Council
21 shall constitute a quorum. The Council cannot hold
22 hearings without a full quorum.

23 (8) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet at the
24 call of the Chairperson but not less frequently than
25 twice during each calendar year.

1 (c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Council shall be—

2 (1) to prepare an annual report to be submitted
3 to the Chairperson of the National Endowment for
4 the Humanities on the work of the National Endow-
5 ment to preserve and celebrate African American
6 history and culture;

7 (2) to gather timely and authoritative informa-
8 tion concerning historical developments and cultural
9 trends in African American history and culture, as
10 well as to monitor the work of museums and organi-
11 zations dedicated to the preservation of African
12 American history and culture, and to analyze and in-
13 terpret such information for the purpose of deter-
14 mining whether national policy is necessary to fur-
15 ther support those efforts;

16 (3) to evaluate the various programs and activi-
17 ties of the National Endowment for the Humanities
18 for the purpose of determining the extent to which
19 such programs and activities are contributing, and
20 the extent to which they are not contributing, to the
21 successful preservation and celebration of African
22 American history and culture, and to make rec-
23 ommendations to the President with respect to such
24 programs and activities;

1 (4) to develop and recommend to the Chair-
2 person national policies to foster and promote the
3 understanding of African American history, the
4 preservation of African American culture, and the
5 celebration of African Americans as contributors to
6 the country's economic, cultural, and political suc-
7 cess; and

8 (5) to make and furnish such studies, reports
9 thereon, and recommendations with respect to mat-
10 ters of cultural preservation and African American
11 history as the Chairperson may request.

12 (d) **APPLICABILITY OF FACA.**—Section 1013(a)(2)
13 of title 5, United States Code (relating to the termination
14 of advisory committees), shall not apply to the Council.

15 (e) **TERMINATION.**—The Council shall terminate 10
16 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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