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119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3890

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

Ms. ALSOBROOKS (for herself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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A BILL

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

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''National Council on African American History and Culture Act of 2026''.

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

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the National Endowment for the Humanities a National

Council on African American History and Culture (referred to in this section as the ''Council'').

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

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

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

(A) are selected from among private citizens of the United States who are recognized for their broad knowledge of, expertise in, or commitment to the preservation and celebration of African American history and culture;

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

(C) have established records of distinguished service, scholarship, or creativity.

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

(A) shall give due regard to equitable representation of women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities who are involved in the humanities;

(B) shall select such members in a manner that ensures a comprehensive representation of the views of scholars and professional practitioners in the humanities and of the public throughout the United States; and

(C) shall ensure that 6 members are individuals affiliated with the Democratic party and 6 members are individuals affiliated with the Republican party.

(4) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Council shall be designated by the President from among the members of the Council. The Vice Chairperson shall act as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

(B) PARTY AFFILIATION.—The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson may not be affiliated with the same political party.

(5) TERM OF OFFICE; VACANCIES; REAPPOINTMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each member shall be appointed for a term of 5 years, except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C).

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

(i) 6 shall be appointed for terms of 3 years, 3 of whom shall be individuals affiliated with the Democratic party and 3 of whom shall be individuals affiliated with the Republican party; and

(ii) 6 shall be appointed for terms of 5 years, 3 of whom shall be individuals affiliated with the Democratic party and 3 of whom shall be individuals affiliated with the Republican party.

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

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

(6) BASIC PAY.—

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

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions under subchapter 1 of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code.

(7) QUORUM.—Nine members of the Council shall constitute a quorum. The Council may not hold hearings without a full quorum.

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

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

(1) to prepare an annual report to be submitted to the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities on the work of the National Endow-

ment to preserve and celebrate African American history and culture;

(2) to gather timely and authoritative information concerning historical developments and cultural trends in African American history and culture, as well as to monitor the work of museums and organizations dedicated to the preservation of African American history and culture, and to analyze and interpret such information for the purpose of determining whether national policy is necessary to further support those efforts;

(3) to evaluate the various programs and activities of the National Endowment for the Humanities for the purpose of determining the extent to which such programs and activities are contributing, and the extent to which they are not contributing, to the successful preservation and celebration of African American history and culture, and to make recommendations to the President with respect to such programs and activities;

(4) to develop and recommend to the Chairperson national policies to foster and promote the understanding of African American history, the preservation of African American culture, and the celebration of African Americans as contributors to

the country's economic, cultural, and political success; and

(5) to make and furnish such studies, reports thereon, and recommendations with respect to matters of cultural preservation and African American history as the Chairperson may request.

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

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

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