

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1621

To authorize a national memorial to commemorate those whose lives were lost to COVID–19 and those who helped the country to recover, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 17, 2023

Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself, Mr. TORRES of New York, and Mr. BOWMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize a national memorial to commemorate those whose lives were lost to COVID–19 and those who helped the country to recover, 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 “COVID–19 National
5 Memorial Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. MEMORIAL.**

7 There is established a memorial located at a des-
8 ignated location in the Bronx, New York, to honor the
9 lives lost and the heroes who helped.

1 **SEC. 3. ADVISORY COMMISSION.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a com-
3 mission to be known as the “COVID–19 National Memo-
4 rial Commission” (hereafter in this Act referred to as the
5 “Commission”).

6 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall consist of
7 15 members, including the Director of the National Park
8 Service, or the Director’s designee, and 14 members ap-
9 pointed by the Secretary.

10 (c) TERM.—The term of the members of the Commis-
11 sion shall be for the life of the Commission.

12 (d) CHAIR.—The members of the Commission shall
13 select the Chair of the Commission.

14 (e) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Commission
15 shall not affect its powers if a quorum is present, but shall
16 be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

17 (f) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the
18 call of the Chairperson or a majority of the members, but
19 not less often than quarterly. Notice of the Commission
20 meetings and agendas for the meetings shall be published
21 in local newspapers in the vicinity of Somerset County and
22 in the Federal Register. Meetings of the Commission shall
23 be subject to section 552b of title 5, United States Code
24 (relating to open meetings).

1 (g) QUORUM.—A majority of the members serving on
2 the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the trans-
3 action of any business.

4 (h) NO COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commis-
5 sion shall serve without compensation, but may be reim-
6 bursed for expenses incurred in carrying out the duties
7 of the Commission.

8 (i) DUTIES.—The duties of the Commission shall be
9 to—

10 (1) not later than 3 years after the date of the
11 enactment of this Act, submit to the Secretary and
12 Congress a report containing recommendations for
13 the planning, design, construction, and long-term
14 management of a permanent memorial;

15 (2) advise the Secretary on the boundaries of
16 the memorial site;

17 (3) advise the Secretary in the development of
18 a management plan for the memorial site;

19 (4) consult and coordinate closely with the
20 State of New York, New York City, the Bronx Bor-
21 ough, and other interested parties; and

22 (5) provide significant opportunities for public
23 participation in the planning and design of the me-
24 morial.

25 (j) POWERS.—The Commission may—

1 (1) make such expenditures for services and
2 materials for the purpose of carrying out this Act as
3 the Commission considers advisable from funds ap-
4 propriated or received as gifts for that purpose;

5 (2) subject to approval by the Secretary, solicit
6 and accept donations of funds and gifts, personal
7 property, supplies, or services from individuals, foun-
8 dations, corporations, and other private or public en-
9 tities to be used in connection with the construction
10 or other expenses of the memorial;

11 (3) hold hearings, enter into contracts for per-
12 sonal services and otherwise;

13 (4) do such other things as are necessary to
14 carry out this Act; and

15 (5) by a vote of the majority of the Commis-
16 sion, delegate such of its duties as it determines ap-
17 propriate to employees of the National Park Service.

18 (k) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate
19 upon dedication of the completed memorial.

20 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.**

21 The Secretary is authorized to—

22 (1) provide assistance to the Commission, in-
23 cluding advice on collections, storage, and archives;

1 (2) consult and assist the Commission in pro-
2 viding information, interpretation, and the conduct
3 of oral history interviews;

4 (3) provide assistance in conducting public
5 meetings and forums held by the Commission;

6 (4) provide project management assistance to
7 the Commission for planning, design, and construc-
8 tion activities;

9 (5) provide programming and design assistance
10 to the Commission for possible memorial exhibits,
11 collections, or activities;

12 (6) provide staff assistance and support to the
13 Commission;

14 (7) participate in the formulation of plans for
15 the design of the memorial, to accept funds raised
16 by the Commission for construction of the memorial,
17 and to construct the memorial;

18 (8) acquire from willing sellers the land or in-
19 terests in land for the memorial site by donation,
20 purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or ex-
21 change; and

22 (9) to administer the memorial as a unit of the
23 National Park System in accordance with this Act

- 1 and with the laws generally applicable to units of the
- 2 National Park System.

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