

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1863

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the sites associated with the life and legacy of the noted American philanthropist and business executive Julius Rosenwald, with a special focus on the Rosenwald Schools, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 13, 2019

Mr. DURBIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the sites associated with the life and legacy of the noted American philanthropist and business executive Julius Rosenwald, with a special focus on the Rosenwald Schools, 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 “Julius Rosenwald and
5 Rosenwald Schools Study Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1 (1) Julius Rosenwald was born in 1862 in
2 Springfield, Illinois, to Samuel Rosenwald and his
3 wife, Augusta Hammerslough, a Jewish immigrant
4 couple from Germany;

5 (2) in 1868, Samuel Rosenwald purchased the
6 Lyon House, where Julius grew up and lived with
7 his family until the 1880s, which—

8 (A) was diagonally across the street from
9 the home where Abraham Lincoln lived prior to
10 becoming president; and

11 (B)(i) was restored recently before the date
12 of enactment of this Act; and

13 (ii) as of that date of enactment, was with-
14 in the boundary of the Lincoln Home National
15 Historic Site, a unit of the National Park Sys-
16 tem;

17 (3) Julius Rosenwald—

18 (A) learned the clothing trade with rel-
19 atives in New York City; and

20 (B) used that knowledge on moving to Chi-
21 cago, where he became part-owner and presi-
22 dent of Sears, Roebuck & Company, which—

23 (i) he transformed into a retailing
24 powerhouse in the early 20th century; and

1 (ii) could be considered the Amazon of
2 its day;

3 (4) the embodiment of the Jewish concept of
4 “tzedakah”, righteousness and charity, Rosenwald
5 used his fortune for numerous philanthropic activi-
6 ties, particularly to enhance the lives of African
7 Americans, including by—

8 (A) providing \$25,000 for the construction
9 of Young Men’s Christian Associations (com-
10 monly known as “YMCAs”) for African Ameri-
11 cans during the Jim Crow era in cities that
12 raised \$75,000; and

13 (B) eventually, supporting the construction
14 of YMCAs in 24 cities across the United States;

15 (5)(A) after his introduction to Booker T.
16 Washington in 1911, Julius Rosenwald—

17 (i) joined the Board of Trustees of the
18 Tuskegee Institute; and

19 (ii) financially contributed to a pilot pro-
20 gram to build 6 schools in rural Alabama for
21 African-American children who were receiving
22 little to no education; and

23 (B) the donations by Rosenwald described in
24 subparagraph (A) were matched by the local Afri-

1 can-American communities that were committed to
2 providing education for their children;

3 (6)(A) the success of the pilot program referred
4 to in paragraph (5)(A)(ii) led to the construction of
5 more than 5,300 Rosenwald Schools and related
6 buildings over a 20-year period in 15 southern
7 States under the direction of the Julius Rosenwald
8 Fund;

9 (B) the schools described in subparagraph
10 (A)—

11 (i) were the result of a 3-way partnership
12 among the Julius Rosenwald Fund, local com-
13 munities that, although generally poor, contrib-
14 uted land, labor, materials, and money to build
15 and maintain the schools, and local govern-
16 ments that were required by law to provide pub-
17 lic schools for all children but divided funds un-
18 equally between Black and White systems; and

19 (ii) often became the focus of great pride
20 and affection among the applicable commu-
21 nities;

22 (C) during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, $\frac{1}{3}$ of
23 all African-American children in the South were edu-
24 cated in Rosenwald Schools;

1 (D) a 2011 study by 2 Federal Reserve econo-
2 mists concluded that the schools played a significant
3 role in narrowing the gap between the educational
4 levels of Black and White students in the South; and

5 (E) Members of Congress and poet Maya
6 Angelou are among prominent graduates of Rosen-
7 wald Schools;

8 (7) the Julius Rosenwald Fund—

9 (A) supported early National Association
10 for the Advancement of Colored People cases
11 that eventually led to the Supreme Court deci-
12 sion in *Brown v. Board of Education of To-*
13 *peka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), which outlawed
14 segregation in public education; and

15 (B) provided fellowships to talented Afri-
16 can Americans in the arts and sciences—

17 (i) including the acclaimed historian
18 John Hope Franklin, noted writer and civil
19 rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois, artist
20 Jacob Lawrence, singer Marian Anderson,
21 diplomat Ralph Bunche, and many others;
22 and

23 (ii) some of whom worked under
24 Thurgood Marshall on the Supreme Court
25 case referred to in subparagraph (A);

1 (8) Rosenwald also—

2 (A) provided support for a number of His-
3 torically Black Colleges and Universities, in-
4 cluding Fisk, Dillard, and Howard Universities;
5 and

6 (B) used his wealth for other worthy
7 causes, including the creation of the Jewish
8 United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago and the
9 Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago;
10 and

11 (9) the contributions of Julius Rosenwald to
12 improving the lives of African Americans, as well as
13 the lives of those who reside in Chicago and
14 throughout the United States, are worthy of recogni-
15 tion and further examination.

16 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

18 (1) ROSENWALD SCHOOL.—The term “Rosen-
19 wald School” means any of the 5,357 schools and
20 related buildings constructed in 15 southern States
21 during the period of 1912 through 1932 by the phi-
22 lanthropy of Julius Rosenwald.

23 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
24 the Secretary of the Interior.

1 (3) SHPO.—The term “SHPO” means the
2 State Historic Preservation Officer of any of the 14
3 States in which Rosenwald Schools exist as of the
4 date of enactment of this Act.

5 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a
7 special resource study of the sites associated with the life
8 and legacy of Julius Rosenwald, with special focus on the
9 Rosenwald Schools.

10 (b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under sub-
11 section (a), the Secretary shall—

12 (1) determine the sites of national significance
13 associated with the life and legacy of businessman
14 and noted philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, with
15 special focus on the Rosenwald Schools;

16 (2) give priority to studying any Rosenwald
17 School recommended to the Secretary by an SHPO;

18 (3) determine the suitability and feasibility of
19 designating 1 or more new units of the National
20 Park System to include representative Rosenwald
21 Schools and other sites associated with the life and
22 legacy of Julius Rosenwald, including an interpretive
23 center in or near Chicago, Illinois—

24 (A) to commemorate the career and overall
25 philanthropic activities of Rosenwald; and

1 (B) to address the scope and significance
2 of the Rosenwald Schools initiative;

3 (4) take into consideration other alternatives
4 for preservation, protection, and interpretation of
5 the legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald
6 Schools by—

7 (A) Federal, State, or local governmental
8 entities; or

9 (B) private and nonprofit organizations;

10 (5) consult with, as determined appropriate by
11 the Secretary, relevant—

12 (A) Federal, State, and local governmental
13 entities;

14 (B) private and nonprofit organizations; or

15 (C) any other interested individuals; and

16 (6) identify costs associated with any potential
17 Federal acquisition, development, interpretation, op-
18 eration, and maintenance associated with the alter-
19 natives described in paragraph (4).

20 (c) APPLICABLE LAW.—The study under subsection
21 (a) shall be conducted in accordance with section 100507
22 of title 54, United States Code.

23 (d) RESULTS.—Not later than 3 years after the date
24 on which funds are first made available for the study
25 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the

1 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural
3 Resources of the Senate a report describing—
4 (1) the results of the study; and
5 (2) any conclusions and recommendations of the
6 Secretary relating to the study.

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