



TESTIMONY TO THE EDUCATION, ENERGY, and the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**SB 341 - Commission on African American History and Culture - Museum Name Change**

**POSITION:** Support

**Submitted By:** Maya Davis, Vice Chair Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

**Date:** February 1, 2024

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture operates the Banneker-Douglass Museum, a museum dedicated to Documenting, interpreting, and promoting African American history & culture. When this museum opened in 1984, the Commission had over five years of discussions and debates on the potential name of this museum. One of the proposed names for the museum was the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. Some of the members of the Commission thought that to have three names was too, while others not understanding Harriet Tubman's contribution to history didn't find her worthy of being included in the name.

Since that 1984, much research has been uncovered on the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman, a formerly enslaved woman from Dorchester County, Maryland, who liberated herself, her family, and other acquaintances in this state, and beyond its borders in states like Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, and internationally in Canada. Her impact on African American History and Culture and the Black Diaspora, is documented in the records of the aforementioned states, written on extensively by scholars, memorialized internationally, and portrayed in film and television series.

Harriet Tubman is one of the beacons and icons of our great state and this country and deserves to have her name placed on the marquis of this amazing museum as a testament to her heroic efforts, connection to Maryland African American history and culture, and as an acknowledgement of the power and achievements of Black women in Maryland. In a post patriarchal Maryland the Commission wants to demonstrate our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by including the name of one of the most powerful women from the state of Maryland, Harriet Tubman, to the Banneker-Douglass Museum's name.

We encourage you to consider favorable support for changing the name of the Banneker-Douglass Museum to the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum.

Best Regards,

Maya Davis, Vice Chair

Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture.