

**Testimony to the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**  
Thursday, February 8, 2024

**Name:** Elizabeth Shatto, Executive Director  
**Organization:** Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA),  
22 S. Market Street, Suite 215, Frederick, MD 21701  
**Issue:** SB0448 Commission to Study African American Soldiers in Maryland  
**Position:** FAV

Senate Bill 0448 proposes the establishment of a Commission to study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland. The organization I lead, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, would be pleased to have a representative serve on the Commission. The Commission's work is relevant to our purpose – our mission statement makes clear that, with our partners, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area preserves and promotes **diverse stories** in our counties (Carroll, Frederick and Washington).

The proposed Commission aligns with our strategic plan, which sets forth foundational Principals for Interpretation to guide our decisions regarding historical research and storytelling. Briefly, they are: (1) the Civil War is unfinished business, (2) Complexity is interesting, and (3) If we don't know the stories, we can't share them.

### CARROLL COUNTY

Hampstead  
Manchester  
Mount Airy  
New Windsor  
Sykesville  
Taneytown  
Union Bridge  
Westminster

We need to know the stories of African Americans in the US military during the Civil War-era more fully. Established in the spring of 1863, the United States Bureau of Colored Troops raised up from recruiting stations throughout the Northern and Border States, including one of significance in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, at Monocacy Junction, just south of Frederick. By the end of the American Civil War at least 540 men had been placed on the muster rolls from Frederick County and sent to enlist in a wide range of units. These included some of the most famous regiments, such as the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantry. Their contributions must be raised up, understood, and honored.

### FREDERICK COUNTY

Brunswick  
Burkittsville  
Emmitsburg  
Frederick  
Middletown  
Mount Airy  
Myersville  
New Market  
Rosemont  
Thurmont  
Woodsboro

Senate Bill 448 anticipates a future tourism product – a memorial that will add to the range of visitor experiences that serve our residents and draw travelers to the State. Underlying the work of all certified heritage areas is tourism enhancement, development, and promotion. Investment in heritage tourism generates a return from which all Marylanders benefit. The most recent impact study found that the Maryland Heritage Areas Program contributes a combined total of \$2.4 billion to the Maryland economy, supports and sustains a combined total of 33,815 full-time and part-time jobs throughout the state, and generates \$319.8 million in state and local tax impact. Underlying the work of all certified heritage areas is tourism enhancement and development and promotion. Investment in heritage tourism generates a return from which all Marylanders benefit. The most recent impact study found that the Maryland Heritage Areas Program contributes a combined total of \$2.4 billion to the Maryland economy, supports and sustains a combined total of 33,815 full-time and part-time jobs throughout the state, and generates \$319.8 million in state and local tax impact.

### WASHINGTON COUNTY

Boonsboro  
Clear Spring  
Funkstown  
Hagerstown  
Hancock  
Keedysville  
Sharpsburg  
Smithsburg  
Williamsport

Products that benefit from the work of the proposed Commission will contribute to the growing economic impact of tourism and help establish Maryland as a place that is responsive to changes in demographics and emerging trends in the travel market. Besides a future memorial, Maryland's museums, historic sites, battlefields as well as numerous cultural and natural resources, will have a source where valid and vetted primary sources can be discovered and used to create compelling exhibits, arts programming, history-themed outdoor recreation and more. Educators will be equipped to tell Maryland's history more completely. Even small businesses, especially those housed in historic structures or operating in historic rural landscapes, may draw on the work of the Commission as they develop their brands and their consumer base.

22 S. Market Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
info@heartofthecivilwar.org  
heartofthecivilwar.org

We recognize that, as currently drafted, the timeline for a Commission report is ambitious. We would also encourage expansion of the scope to include both soldiers *and* sailors – but that would, of course, add to the timeline challenge. These concerns do not diminish our support for Senate Bill 448. We welcome robust discussion and hope for your favorable consideration. Thank you.

