

SHANEKA HENSON
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Ways and Means Committee

Joint Committee on
Children, Youth, and Families



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB390/SB0341:

Commission on African American History and Culture - Museum Name Change

TO: Hon. Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair, and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee,

FROM: Delegate Shaneka Henson, District 30A, Anne Arundel County

DATE: January 26th, 2024

RE: HB390 / SB 0341- FAV

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

Today, I bring to your attention and request your support for House Bill 390, a proposal that seeks to enrich our cultural landscape and honor a woman whose indomitable spirit has inspired generations – Harriet Tubman.

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) proposes to add Tubman's name to the Banneker-Douglass Museum, transforming it into the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. This addition symbolizes the remarkable contributions of Black women abolitionists and civil rights leaders in Maryland, whose tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on American democracy.

The Banneker-Douglass Museum, founded in 1984, pays homage to Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglass, two pivotal figures in African American history. Benjamin Banneker, the first African American man of science and mathematics, protested against slavery and left an enduring legacy. Frederick Douglass, born a slave, rose to international prominence as a social crusader, advocating tirelessly for the abolition of slavery and supporting the women's suffrage movement.

Now, we stand at the threshold of a historic moment, ready to recognize another Maryland icon – Harriet Tubman. Born into slavery, Tubman's journey from a precarious start to becoming a fearless abolitionist, humanitarian, and spy during the Civil War is an inspiration to us all. She

successfully navigated dangerous territories, rescuing enslaved individuals and contributing significantly to the Union army's cause.

Harriet Tubman's commitment to the fight for freedom mirrors the struggles we face today. The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum will serve as a testament to her legacy and the enduring power of Black women in shaping our history. This museum will continue to be a beacon of education, inspiring individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

In adding Tubman's name to the museum, we not only recognize her pivotal role in history but also honor the collective strength of Black women.

I urge each member of this esteemed committee to support House Bill 390, recognizing the importance of honoring Harriet Tubman and the invaluable contributions of Black women in Maryland's history. Together, let us take this momentous step towards preserving and celebrating our rich African American heritage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SHH', written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Delegate Shaneka Henson

District 30A- Anne Arundel County