

House Bill – 133 FWA

To: Delegate Christopher Eric Bouchat – District 5 – Carroll & Frederick

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As a resident of Carroll County for 50+ years and a student of Civil War history, I am very aware of the tremendous contribution of Black men from Maryland who enlisted in the United States Colored Infantry. They also enlisted in the United States Navy and served on vessels involved in the war so I would like to see this bill amended to include recognition of men who served in the U.S. Navy.

I've identified over 100 African American men who joined the Union Army or U.S. Navy who had a close association with Carroll County – were born here, were enslaved here, or lived here after the war ended. Documentation of these men's service and lives may be found at the Historical Society of Carroll County.

Some of the men never returned from the war, but many did, and left their mark in their Carroll County communities as teachers, ministers, school trustees, and as model citizens. Some appear in a list of qualified voters in 1873. Some of them joined Carroll's Thaddeus Stephens G.A.R. Post which supported veterans. Their wives, mothers, and other women participated in the Women's Relief Corps, an auxiliary of the G.A.R., which also helped the veterans and their families.

The Black men who served in the Civil War brought back a larger world view to their otherwise small, isolated communities. They championed better education for their children with schools close to home, helped establish churches, and stood as hard-working role models.

It is entirely fitting that Maryland recognize the contribution of her Black men who served in various capacities during the Civil War – on the battlefields, on ships, or in non-combat roles which are not well known. What they did during and after the war made Maryland a better state for its Black citizens.