



Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

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www.africanamerican.maryland.gov

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Jan. 26, 2024

Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Greetings Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

As the Director of the Banneker-Douglass Museum, Maryland's official state museum on African American History and Culture, I come to you today to humbly request your support of House Bill 390. We aim to update our museum's name from the Banneker-Douglass Museum to the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. Our museum serves to document, interpret, and promote African American history and culture (particularly in Maryland) through exhibitions, programs, and projects in order to improve the understanding and appreciation of America's rich cultural diversity for all.

Our current namesakes are Maryland-born Frederick Douglass, famed abolitionist, and orator, and Benjamin Banneker, scientist, and astronomer, who helped survey the boundaries of our Nation's capital, Washington DC. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Dorchester County, Maryland; she would self-liberate, becoming an abolitionist to help liberate members of her own family and network. Tubman became the first woman to lead a major military operation, rescuing more than 700 enslaved men, women, and children during the Civil War. Later, she became a women's suffrage activist. Including Tubman in our naming would honor this incredible hero and symbolize Black women's many contributions to our state and country.

The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, the name itself, represents African American men and women who have inspired and continue to inspire generations of people of all ages and backgrounds.

This year, 2024, is the 160th anniversary of Maryland's emancipation, which in 1864 freed enslaved African Americans in our state. During this milestone year, we ask for your support in honoring this trailblazer representing freedom, community, and bravery in our state.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chanel C. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Chanel C. Johnson
Executive Director