

**STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC LANDS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 3967, TO AMEND THE NATIONAL GREAT BLACK AMERICANS COMMEMORATION ACT OF 2004 TO AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATIONS THROUGH 2015.**

**April 27, 2010**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 3967, a bill to amend the National Great Black Americans Commemoration Act of 2004 to authorize appropriations through fiscal year 2015.

H.R. 3967 does not appear to provide any role for the Department of the Interior with the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum nor are we aware of any connection this museum has with any national park programs. We therefore, defer to the Department of Justice for its position on this legislation.

H.R. 3967 would extend authorization of appropriations through fiscal year 2015. In 2004, Congress passed the National Great Black Americans Commemoration Act of 2004 (PL 108-238) authorizing the Department of Justice to provide grants to “carry out programs relating to civil rights and juvenile justice through the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum and Justice Learning Center” in Baltimore, Maryland, administered by a non-profit group, the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.

**STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, REGARDING H.R. 4514, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY TO DETERMINE THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF DESIGNATING THE COLONEL CHARLES YOUNG HOME IN XENIA, OHIO, AS A UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.**

**April 27, 2010**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 4514, a bill to authorize a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the Colonel Charles Young Home in Xenia, Ohio, as a unit of the National Park System.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 4514. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 47 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic River System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

H.R. 4514 authorizes a special resource study, in consultation with the Secretary of the Army, to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the Colonel Charles Young Home as a unit of the National Park System, and to consider other alternatives for preservation and protection of the home and interpretation of the life and accomplishments of Colonel Young for future appreciation by the public. The bill also authorizes consultation and collaboration with the Ohio Historical Society, Central State University, Wilberforce University and other interested Federal, State or local governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations or individuals in accomplishing the resource study. The home is a National Historic Landmark. We estimate the cost of this study to range from \$200,000 to \$250,000, based on similar types of studies conducted in recent years.

Colonel Charles Young was the third African-American to graduate from West Point, and a distinguished African-American officer in the United States Army, commanding troops in combat in the Spanish-American War and the Mexican expedition against Pancho Villa. Colonel Young was one of the first military attaches in the United States, serving in Haiti and Liberia, and a pioneer of techniques in military intelligence. The experience of Colonel Young in the Army between 1884 and 1922 illustrates the changing nature of race relations in the United States during a period spanning from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the Civil Rights movement.

Colonel Young was a friend and associate of other distinguished African-Americans of the period, including poet Paul Laurence Dunbar from nearby Dayton, Ohio; and as the commander of an Army unit assigned to protect and develop Sequoia National Park and General Grant

National Park in the State of California, Colonel Young is recognized as the first African-American to be the superintendent of a National Park.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or other Committee members may have regarding this bill.