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CARDIN, MIKULSKI INTRODUCE BILL TO HONOR HARRIET TUBMAN'S LIFE ON EASTERN SHORE AND IN NEW YORK

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD) today joined **Senators Charles Schumer** and **Hillary Rodham Clinton** (both D-NY) in introducing legislation to honor the life of Harriet Ross Tubman, the most famous “conductor” of the anti-slavery resistance network known as the Underground Railroad.

The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park Act will establish two parks, one in Maryland and one in New York. The National Historic Park in Maryland will trace Tubman’s early life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she was born and later escaped from slavery to become one of the leaders on the Underground Railroad. The National Historic Park in New York will be located in Auburn and will focus on her later years where she was active in the suffrage movement and in providing for the welfare of aged African Americans.

Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester County, Maryland, where she spent nearly 30 years as a slave. She escaped slavery in 1849, but returned for more than 10 years to Dorchester and Caroline counties where she led hundreds of African Americans to freedom. Known as “Moses” by African-American and white abolitionists, she reportedly never lost a “passenger” on the Underground Railroad.

“Harriet Tubman was a true American patriot, for whom liberty and freedom were not just concepts,” said **Senator Cardin**. “She lived those principles and shared that freedom with hundreds of others. These two parks will make it possible for Marylanders and the entire nation to trace her life’s work and remember all that she was able to accomplish.”

“Harriet Tubman was a courageous fighter who delivered 300 slaves to freedom on her Underground Railroad and was tireless in her commitment to fight for those who could not fight themselves. Her life continues to inspire me,” said **Senator Mikulski**. “That’s why I am proud to fight for legislation that will honor, preserve and protect her legacy.”

“Harriett Tubman is one of our great American heroes and a fighter of injustices in America. These things were very important during that era because America was headed in the wrong direction for all civil liberties,” said Donald Pinder, President of the Harriet Tubman

Organization.

In Maryland, The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park would include historically important landscapes in Dorchester, Caroline and Talbot counties that are evocative of the life of Harriet Tubman. The Maryland properties include about 2,200 acres in Caroline County that comprise the Poplar Neck plantation that Tubman escaped from in 1849. The 725 acres of viewshed across the Choptank River in Talbot County would also be included in the Park. In Dorchester County, the parcels would not be contiguous, but would include about 2,775 acres. All of them are included within the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge boundaries or abut that resource land. The National Park Service would not own any of these lands.

In New York, The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park would include important historical structures in Auburn, New York. They include Tubman's home, the Home for the Aged that she established, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, and the Fort Hill Cemetery where she is buried.

"Harriet Tubman was undoubtedly one of the earliest and most honorable civil rights leaders in our nation's history, helping African-Americans escape slavery using the Underground Railroad," said **Senator Schumer**. "This bill will provide funding to establish a National Historic Park in Auburn where Harriet Tubman was active in the suffrage movement and where she established one of the first incorporated homes for aged African Americans. I am glad that such a historic site in New York will be recognized to preserve the memory of Harriet Tubman so that future generations will know the great sacrifices that she made and remember her as one of America's great heroes."

"Harriet Tubman was a true American hero whose lifelong devotion to liberty and justice remains an inspiration. Memorializing the places where her life began in Maryland and her final resting place in Auburn, New York is a fitting tribute to this remarkable woman and her life's work that brought freedom to so many others," said **Senator Clinton**.

"I commend Senators Cardin and Mikulski for introducing this bill to create America's newest national park. This legislation recognizes Harriet Tubman as one of America's greatest heroes and conserves the places where she led so many to freedom," said Charles Jordan, a board member and former Chairman of The Conservation Fund, a national nonprofit land and water conservation organization. "Protection of these historic landscapes will allow our children to learn first-hand about this vital chapter in American history and provide new heritage tourism resources for local communities." The Conservation Fund has played a key role in protecting many of the historically important natural landscapes in and around the Blackwater Refuge.

The bill authorizes \$11 million in grants for the Maryland section. Funds can be used for the construction of the Harriet Tubman State Park Visitors Center and for easements or acquisition of properties inside or adjacent to the Historical Park boundaries. In New York, the bill authorizes \$7.5 million in grants for the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of the Auburn properties.

Finally, the bill also authorizes a new grants program. Under the program, the National Park Service would award competitive grants to historically Black colleges and universities, predominately Black institutions, and minority serving institutions for research into the life of

Harriet Tubman and the African-American experience during the years that coincide with the life of Harriet Tubman. The legislation authorizes \$200,000 annually for this scholarship program.

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