

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to encourage you to use your authority under the *Antiquities Act* to establish a national monument commemorating the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the impact of Rosenwald Schools. Julius Rosenwald's philanthropy changed the course of African American education in south and had significant impacts on our society. We support elevating the story, people, and schools that facilitated that change through the creation of a national monument.

Julius Rosenwald, the son of German Jewish immigrants, helped make Sears, Roebuck and Company the retail powerhouse of the 20th century and used his wealth to become a visionary philanthropist. During the Jim Crow era, Rosenwald partnered with Booker T. Washington and nearly 5,000 African American communities in the South that lacked educational opportunities for their children to build schools in 15 states. A total of 5,357 Rosenwald School facilities were constructed, educating one-third of African Americans in the South and giving the students an opportunity for better lives. Congressman John Lewis, Medgar Evers, and Maya Angelou are among the many famous graduates.

In 2022, after the *Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools Act of 2020* (P.L. 116-336) was signed into law, the National Park Service began conducting a Special Resource Study (SRS) on the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools. The SRS is estimated to be completed in the spring of 2024.

This effort is supported by the Campaign to Create the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park (Campaign), the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. All three organizations recommend that the national monument consist of the San Domingo Rosenwald School in Wicomico County, Maryland; Rosenwald's boyhood home in Springfield, Illinois; and an easement on the Nichols Tower in the former Sears, Roebuck and Company merchandising plant in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago.

A national monument would be of national historical significance and the first to commemorate the life and legacy of a Jewish American. It also would acknowledge the impact of Rosenwald Schools in the segregated South, and address early Black-Jewish partnerships and the role of philanthropy in the United States. Importantly, a national monument also would pay tribute to the value of education as an equalizing force. As Julius Rosenwald so aptly stated, "I do not see how America can go forward if part of its people are left behind."

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to preserve and interpret this little-known, but highly important part of American history.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator