

Calendar No. 291

111TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
{ 111-141

LONGFELLOW HOUSE—WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

MARCH 2, 2010.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 1405]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 1405) to redesignate the Longfellow National Historic Site, Massachusetts, as the “Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site”, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 1405 is to redesignate the Longfellow National Historic Site in Massachusetts as the Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Longfellow National Historic Site located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, preserves and tells the story of famed American poet and writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Longfellow and his wife Frances Appleton were given the home as a wedding gift and Longfellow lived there from 1843 until his death in 1882. The structure serves as an outstanding example of New England colonial architecture and it, the grounds, and the furnishings are all well preserved.

The historical site also served as George Washington’s headquarters during the siege of Boston in 1775 and 1776. The house had been abandoned in the early stages of the war by the owner who sympathized with the British. It was later chosen by George Washington as his first headquarters during the Revolutionary

War. Washington and his officers moved in soon after he assumed command of the Continental Army in July, 1775. The house was occupied by Washington until April.

S. 1405 redesignates the national historic site as the Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site, which will more accurately describe a significant component of the site’s history.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 1405 was introduced on July 7, 2009, by Senators Kennedy and Kerry. Senator Kirk is a cosponsor. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on the bill on November 4, 2009. At its business meeting on December 16, 2009, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 1405 favorably reported without amendment.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on December 16, 2009, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 1405.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 contains the short title for the bill, the “Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site Designation Act.”

Section 2 redesignates the Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as the Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site, and provides that any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Longfellow National Historic Site shall be considered to be a reference to the Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 1405—Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site Designation Act

S. 1405 would rename the Longfellow National Historic Site, located in Massachusetts, the Longfellow House—Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site. CBO estimates that implementing the name change would have no significant effect on the federal budget. Enacting S. 1405 would not affect direct spending or revenues.

The legislation contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 1405.

The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 1405, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

S. 1405, as reported, does not contain any congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The testimony provided by the National Park Service at the November 4, 2009, Subcommittee hearing on S. 1405 follows:

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on S. 1405 to redesignate the Longfellow National Historic Site in Massachusetts as the Longfellow House-Washington Headquarters National Historic Site.

The Department supports enactment of this legislation.

On June 16, 1775, George Washington accepted the appointment of the Continental Congress as commander of the yet-to-be-formed Continental Army. He immediately journeyed north to take command of New England militia troops on July 3, 1775, and conduct a siege of British-held Boston, Massachusetts. A house, abandoned by Loyalist John Vassall, on Brattle Street in Cambridge became his headquarters for nine months during the conflict. Vassall had been forced to flee the house shortly after the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Washington's wife Martha, along with other family members and servants from Virginia, joined him there for four of those months.

From a ground floor office in the house, Washington struggled with the numerous problems of his new command. Among these were defending the region against the well-trained British troops occupying Boston, bringing discipline to the untrained militia, and supplying his army with arms and the accoutrements of war. It was here, too, that he gave command to Benedict Arnold of a small force to attack Quebec over the mountains of Maine and confronted Dr. Benjamin Church, a patriot leader, with evidence that he was a British spy. From Cambridge, Washington provided for the development of a network of spies

in Boston to report on British plans and movements. He also approved the arming and use of vessels to confront British supply ships.

The siege proved to be successful and the British withdrew from Boston without the destruction of lives and property that a major battle would have caused. For his efforts, Washington received a medal from Congress and an honorary degree from Harvard.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his wife Fanny received the house on Brattle Street as a wedding gift from his wife's father in 1843. Both expressed pride in owning the house that had been Washington's headquarters. Fanny Longfellow wrote:

“. . . we are full of plans and projects with no desire, however, to change a feature of the old countenance which Washington has rendered sacred.”

Longfellow relished conducting tours of the house when tourists would inquire about the period when it was Washington's headquarters. The Longfellows also collected Washington memorabilia, which are prominent among the furnishings they left and which are preserved today at the national historic site.

Public Law 92-475, which authorized the establishment of the national historic site in 1972, recognized the role that the house played as the headquarters of General George Washington during the siege of Boston between 1775 and 1776. Redesignation of the national historic site will better enable visitors to identify the importance of the full history of the resource and appreciate Longfellow's veneration of George Washington.

The appropriateness of redesignating the name of the national historic site was perhaps best expressed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, himself, from the same ground floor office used by Washington. In 1845, in his poem entitled “To a Child”, he wrote this passage:

Once, ah, once, within these walls,
 One whom memory oft recalls,
 The Father of his Country, dwelt.
 And yonder meadows broad and damp
 The fires of the besieging camp
 Encircled with a burning belt.
 Up and down these echoing stairs,
 Heavy with the weight of cares,
 Sounded his majestic tread;
 Yes, within this very room
 Sat he in those hours of gloom,
 Weary both in heart and head.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or members of the committee may have regarding the proposed redesignation.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the bill S. 1405, as ordered reported.

