

Public Law 105-356
105th Congress

An Act

Nov. 6, 1998
[S. 2232]

To establish the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site in the State of Arkansas, and for other purposes.

16 USC 461 note
[table].

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—The Congress finds that—

(1) the 1954 United States Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which mandated an end to the segregation of public schools, was one of the most significant Court decisions in the history of the United States.

(2) the admission of nine African-American students, known as the “Little Rock Nine”, to Little Rock’s Central High School as a result of the *Brown* decision, was the most prominent national example of the implementation of the *Brown* decision, and served as a catalyst for the integration of other, previously segregated public schools in the United States;

(3) 1997 marked the 70th anniversary of the construction of Central High School, which has been named by the American Institute of Architects as “the most beautiful high school building in America”;

(4) Central High School was included on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark in 1982 in recognition of its national significance in the development of the Civil Rights movement in the United States; and

(5) the designation of Little Rock Central High School as a unit of the National Park System will recognize the significant role the school played in the desegregation of public schools in the South and will interpret for future generations the events associated with early desegregation of southern schools.

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this Act is to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit, education, and inspiration of present and future generations, Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and its role in the integration of public schools and the development of the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site in the State of Arkansas (hereinafter referred to as the “historic site”) is hereby established as a unit of the National Park System. The historic site shall consist of lands and interests therein comprising the Central High School campus and

adjacent properties in Little Rock, Arkansas, as generally depicted on a map entitled "Proposed Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site", numbered LIRO-20,000 and dated July, 1998. Such map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(b) ADMINISTRATION OF HISTORIC SITE.—The Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") shall administer the historic site in accordance with this Act. Only those lands under the direct jurisdiction of the Secretary shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System including the Act of August 25, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 1, 2-4) and the Act of August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467). Nothing in this Act shall affect the authority of the Little Rock School District to administer Little Rock Central High School nor shall this Act affect the authorities of the City of Little Rock in the neighborhood surrounding the school.

(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—(1) The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with appropriate public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions (including, but not limited to, the State of Arkansas, the City of Little Rock, the Little Rock School District, Central High Museum, Inc., Central High Neighborhood, Inc., or the University of Arkansas) in furtherance of the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Secretary shall coordinate visitor interpretation of the historic site with the Little Rock School District and the Central High School Museum, Inc.

(d) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Within three years after the date funds are made available, the Secretary shall prepare a general management plan for the historic site. The plan shall be prepared in consultation and coordination with the Little Rock School District, the City of Little Rock, Central High Museum, Inc., and with other appropriate organizations and agencies. The plan shall identify specific roles and responsibilities for the National Park Service in administering the historic site, and shall identify lands or property, if any, that might be necessary for the National Park Service to acquire in order to carry out its responsibilities. The plan shall also identify the roles and responsibilities of other entities in administering the historic site and its programs. The plan shall include a management framework that ensures the administration of the historic site does not interfere with the continuing use of Central High School as an educational institution.

Deadline.

(e) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire by purchase with donated or appropriated funds by exchange, or donation the lands and interests therein located within the boundaries of the historic site: *Provided*, That the Secretary may only acquire lands or interests therein within the consent of the owner thereof: *Provided further*, That lands or interests therein owned by the State of Arkansas or a political subdivision thereof, may only be acquired by donation or exchange.

SEC. 3. DESEGREGATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION THEME STUDY.

(a) THEME STUDY.—Within two years after the date funds are made available, the Secretary shall prepare and transmit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a National Historic Landmark Theme Study (hereinafter referred to as the "theme study") on the history of desegregation in public

Deadline.

education. The purpose of the theme study shall be to identify sites, districts, buildings, structures, and landscapes that best illustrate or commemorate key events or decisions in the historical movement to provide for racial desegregation in public education. On the basis of the theme study, the Secretary shall identify possible new national historic landmarks appropriate to this theme and prepare a list in order of importance or merit of the most appropriate sites for national historic landmark designation.

(b) **OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.**—The theme study shall identify appropriate means to establish linkages between sites identified in subsection (a) and between those sites and the Central High School National Historic Site established in section 2, and with other existing units of the National Park System to maximize opportunities for public education and scholarly research on desegregation in public education. The theme study also shall recommend opportunities for cooperative arrangements with State and local governments, educational institutions, local historical organizations, and other appropriate entities to preserve and interpret key sites in the history of desegregation in public education.

(c) **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.**—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with one or more educational institutions, public history organizations, or civil rights organizations knowledgeable about desegregation in public education to prepare the theme study and to ensure that the theme study meets scholarly standards.

(d) **THEME STUDY COORDINATION WITH GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—The theme study shall be prepared as part of the preparation and development of the general management plan for the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site established in section 2.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

Approved November 6, 1998.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 2232:

SENATE REPORTS: No. 105-307 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 144 (1998):

Oct. 2, considered and passed Senate.

Oct. 8, considered and passed House.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 34 (1998):
Nov. 6, Presidential remarks.