

1998 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 59

Establishing a Week of Remembrance of the Freedmen's Cemetery in Alexandria.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 13, 1998
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 12, 1998

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, a cemetery was established in Alexandria for the thousands of African-Americans who arrived in that city seeking freedom; and

WHEREAS, originally known as "Contrabands," these freedom-seeking Americans later were called "Freedmen"; and

WHEREAS, the Freedmen suffered greatly during and immediately after the Civil War, and among the facilities built for them by the United States Army was a cemetery, located on South Washington Street across from the Catholic cemetery known as St. Mary's; and

WHEREAS, records indicate there were some 1,879 burials in Freedmen's Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, for too long forgotten and neglected, Freedmen's Cemetery is today unrecognizable, with no visible sign of the cemetery and there is doubt about its exact boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the City of Alexandria has taken steps to protect and preserve this vital part of the historical heritage of Alexandria, the Commonwealth, and the nation and has designated the final week of May as the Week of Remembrance of the Freedmen's Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, as part of its efforts, the City of Alexandria plans to work towards designation of the Freedmen's Cemetery as both a Virginia Landmarks Register property and a National Register of Historic Places property; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby designate the last week in May 1998 and of each succeeding year, as the Week of Remembrance of the Freedmen's Cemetery in Alexandria; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly urge the citizens of the Commonwealth to observe the Week of Remembrance by reflecting on the unique travails and contributions of the thousands of Americans whose remains rest in the Freedmen's Cemetery; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the City Manager of the City of Alexandria and the Chair of the Freedmen's Cemetery Committee so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

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