

STATEMENT OF VICTOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 610, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY OF P.S. 103 IN WEST BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

June 10, 2015

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on S. 610, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of P.S. 103 in West Baltimore, Maryland, and for other purposes.

The Department supports enactment of S. 610. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 33 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that have not yet been transmitted to Congress.

S. 610 authorizes a special resource study of Public School 103 and other resources in the neighborhood that relate to the early life of Thurgood Marshall in Baltimore, Maryland. This study would determine whether this site meets the National Park Service's criteria for inclusion in the National Park System of national significance, suitability, and feasibility, and need for National Park Service management. The study would also consider other alternatives for preservation, protection, and interpretation of the resources by the Federal government, State or local government entities, or private and non-profit entities. Alternatives might include, for example, the designation of the site as an affiliated area of the National Park Service, where the National Park Service would provide technical assistance to the site but not own or manage it. We estimate the cost of the study to range from \$200,000 to \$300,000, based on similar types of studies conducted in recent years.

P.S. 103 was originally built in 1877 for West Baltimore's white immigrant population but, in 1911, it became a segregated African-American school serving the Upton community of West Baltimore. The school is significant for its role in the education of Thurgood Marshall, who is best known as the lead counsel for the landmark school desegregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and as the first African-American Supreme Court Justice. Marshall's life and his life's work began in Baltimore: it is the city where he was born in 1908, where he began his public education, and where he won his first civil rights cases as a young attorney. Thurgood Marshall attended P.S. 103 from 1st through 8th grade (1914 to 1921).

Marshall's accomplishments in systematically dismantling the legal framework for Jim Crow segregation are the foundation upon which the success of the Civil Rights Movement was built. P.S. 103 is owned by the City of Baltimore and is included in the Baltimore National Heritage Area.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes our prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions about this matter.