

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H.R. 2989  
OFFERED BY MS. NORTON OF THE DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Frederick Douglass  
3 Bicentennial Commission Act”.

**4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress makes the following findings:

6 (1) Born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of  
7 Maryland in 1818 and given the name Frederick  
8 Augustus Washington Bailey after his mother Har-  
9 riet Bailey, Frederick Douglass has been called the  
10 father of the civil rights movement.

11 (2) Douglass rose through determination, bril-  
12 liance, and eloquence to shape the American Nation.  
13 He was an abolitionist, human rights and women’s  
14 rights activist, orator, author, journalist, publisher,  
15 and social reformer.

16 (3) Taught basic reading skills by his mistress  
17 until she was forced to stop, Douglass continued to

1 teach himself to read and write and taught other  
2 slaves to read despite risks including death.

3 (4) During the course of his remarkable life  
4 Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery, became  
5 internationally renowned for his eloquence in the  
6 cause of liberty, and went on to serve the national  
7 government in several official capacities.

8 (5) Forced to leave the country to avoid arrest  
9 as an escaped slave, he returned to become a  
10 staunch advocate of the Union cause and helped re-  
11 cruit African-American troops for the Union Army,  
12 including two of his sons, Charles and Lewis Doug-  
13 lass. His personal relationship with Abraham Lin-  
14 coln helped persuade the President to make emanci-  
15 pation a cause of the Civil War.

16 (6) With the abolition of slavery at the close of  
17 the Civil War, Douglass then turned his attention to  
18 the full integration of African-Americans into the  
19 political and economic life of the United States.  
20 Committed to freedom, Douglass dedicated his life  
21 to achieving justice for all Americans, in particular  
22 African-Americans, women, and minority groups. He  
23 envisioned America as an inclusive Nation strength-  
24 ened by diversity and free of discrimination.

1           (7) Douglass served as an advisor to Presi-  
2           dents. Abraham Lincoln referred to him as the most  
3           meritorious man of the nineteenth century. Douglass  
4           was appointed to several offices. He served as the  
5           United States Marshal of the District of Columbia  
6           under Rutherford B. Hayes' administration; Presi-  
7           dent James Garfield appointed Douglass the District  
8           of Columbia Recorder of Deeds. In 1889, President  
9           Benjamin Harrison appointed Frederick Douglass to  
10          be the United States minister to Haiti. He was also  
11          appointed by President Grant to serve as Assistant  
12          Secretary of the Commission of Inquiry to Santo  
13          Domingo.

14          (8) Douglass lived in the District of Columbia  
15          for 23 of his 57 years as a free man, and in recogni-  
16          tion of his leadership and continuous fight for jus-  
17          tice and freedom, his home, Cedar Hill, was estab-  
18          lished as a National Historic Site in Anacostia, in  
19          Southeast Washington, DC.

20          (9) The statue of Frederick Douglass in the  
21          United States Capitol is a gift from the almost  
22          700,000 residents of the District of Columbia.

23          (10) All Americans could benefit from studying  
24          the life of Frederick Douglass, for Douglass dedi-  
25          cated his own life to ensuring freedom and equality

1 for future generations of Americans. This Nation  
2 should ensure that his tireless struggle, trans-  
3 formative words, and inclusive vision of humanity  
4 continue to inspire and sustain us.

5 (11) The year 2018 marks the bicentennial an-  
6 niversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass, and a  
7 commission should be established to plan, develop,  
8 and carry out, and to recommend to Congress, pro-  
9 grams and activities that are fitting and proper to  
10 celebrate that anniversary in a manner that appro-  
11 priately honors Frederick Douglass.

12 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

13 There is established a commission to be known as the  
14 Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission (referred to  
15 in this Act as the “Commission”).

16 **SEC. 4. DUTIES.**

17 The Commission shall have the following duties:

18 (1) To plan, develop, and carry out programs  
19 and activities that are fitting and proper to honor  
20 Frederick Douglass on the occasion of the bicenten-  
21 nial anniversary of Douglass’ birth.

22 (2) To recommend to Congress programs and  
23 activities that the Commission considers fitting and  
24 proper to honor Frederick Douglass on such occa-  
25 sion, and the entity or entities in the Federal Gov-

1           ernment that the Commission considers most appro-  
2           priate to carry out such programs and activities.

3 **SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.**

4           (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission  
5 shall be composed of 16 members appointed as follows:

6           (1) Two members, each of whom shall be a  
7           qualified citizen described in subsection (b), ap-  
8           pointed by the President.

9           (2) One member, who shall be a qualified cit-  
10          izen described in subsection (b), appointed by the  
11          President on the recommendation of the Governor of  
12          Maryland.

13          (3) One member, who shall be a qualified cit-  
14          izen described in subsection (b), appointed by the  
15          President on the recommendation of the Governor of  
16          Massachusetts.

17          (4) One member, who shall be a qualified cit-  
18          izen described in subsection (b), appointed by the  
19          President on the recommendation of the Governor of  
20          New York.

21          (5) One member, who shall be a qualified cit-  
22          izen described in subsection (b), appointed by the  
23          President on the recommendation of the Mayor of  
24          the District of Columbia.

1           (6) Three members, at least one of whom shall  
2           be a Member of the House of Representatives, ap-  
3           pointed by the Speaker of the House of Representa-  
4           tives.

5           (7) Three members, at least one of whom shall  
6           be a Senator, appointed by the majority leader of  
7           the Senate.

8           (8) Two members, at least one of whom shall  
9           be a Member of the House of Representatives, ap-  
10          pointed by the minority leader of the House of Rep-  
11          resentatives.

12          (9) Two members, at least one of whom shall  
13          be a Senator, appointed by the minority leader of  
14          the Senate.

15          (b) QUALIFIED CITIZEN.—A qualified citizen de-  
16          scribed in this subsection is a private citizen of the United  
17          States with—

18               (1) a demonstrated dedication to educating oth-  
19               ers about the importance of historical figures and  
20               events; and

21               (2) substantial knowledge and appreciation of  
22               Frederick Douglass.

23          (c) TIME OF APPOINTMENT.—Each initial appoint-  
24          ment of a member of the Commission shall be made before

1 the expiration of the 60-day period beginning on the date  
2 of the enactment of this Act.

3 (d) CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP.—If a member  
4 of the Commission was appointed to the Commission as  
5 a Member of Congress, and ceases to be a Member of Con-  
6 gress, that member may continue to serve on the Commis-  
7 sion for not longer than the 30-day period beginning on  
8 the date that member ceases to be a Member of Congress.

9 (e) TERMS.—Each member shall be appointed for the  
10 life of the Commission.

11 (f) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall  
12 not affect the powers of the Commission but shall be filled  
13 in the manner in which the original appointment was  
14 made.

15 (g) BASIC PAY.—Members shall serve on the Com-  
16 mission without pay.

17 (h) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive  
18 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,  
19 in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5,  
20 United States Code.

21 (i) QUORUM.—Six members of the Commission shall  
22 constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hear-  
23 ings.

24 (j) CHAIR.—The Commission shall select a Chair  
25 from among the members of the Commission.

1 (k) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the  
2 call of the Chair. Periodically, the Commission shall hold  
3 a meeting in Rochester, New York.

4 **SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.**

5 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission may appoint and  
6 fix the pay of a Director and such additional personnel  
7 as the Commission considers to be appropriate.

8 (b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE  
9 LAWS.—

10 (1) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Commis-  
11 sion may be appointed without regard to the provi-  
12 sions of title 5, United States Code, governing ap-  
13 pointments in the competitive service, and may be  
14 paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51  
15 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relat-  
16 ing to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

17 (2) STAFF.—The staff of the Commission shall  
18 be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5,  
19 United States Code, governing appointments in the  
20 competitive service, and shall be paid in accordance  
21 with the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III  
22 of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification  
23 and General Schedule pay rates.

1 **SEC. 7. POWERS.**

2 (a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission  
3 may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold such  
4 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such  
5 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission  
6 considers to be appropriate.

7 (b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any mem-  
8 ber or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the  
9 Commission, take any action that the Commission is au-  
10 thorized to take by this Act.

11 (c) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Commission  
12 may secure directly from any department or agency of the  
13 United States information necessary to enable the Com-  
14 mission to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Chair  
15 of the Commission, the head of that department or agency  
16 shall furnish that information to the Commission.

17 (d) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United  
18 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-  
19 ditions as other departments and agencies of the United  
20 States.

21 (e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon  
22 the request of the Commission, the Administrator of Gen-  
23 eral Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reim-  
24 bursable basis, the administrative support services nec-  
25 essary for the Commission to carry out its responsibilities  
26 under this Act.

1 (f) GIFTS.—The Commission may solicit, accept, use,  
2 and dispose of gifts, bequests, or devises of money or other  
3 property for carrying out its duties.

4 **SEC. 8. REPORTS.**

5 (a) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than August 1,  
6 2018, the Commission shall submit to Congress an initial  
7 report containing its recommendations under section 4(2).

8 (b) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than June 1, 2019,  
9 the Commission shall submit a final report to Congress,  
10 and shall include in the final report—

11 (1) a summary of its activities and programs;

12 (2) a final accounting of the funds the Commis-  
13 sion received and expended; and

14 (3) any other information that the Commission  
15 considers to be appropriate.

16 **SEC. 9. TERMINATION.**

17 The Commission shall terminate 30 days after sub-  
18 mitting the final report pursuant to section 8(b).

