



## Julius Rosenwald-Rosenwald Schools National Park Campaign



September 24, 2018

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth  
524 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Durbin and Duckworth:

We the undersigned support the introduction and passage of legislation that would direct the National Park Service to undertake a Special Resource Study of sites associated with the life and legacy of the noted American philanthropist and business executive Julius Rosenwald with special emphasis on the Rosenwald Schools.

Julius Rosenwald's contributions to improving the lives of African-Americans are worthy of recognition and further examination. The embodiment of the Jewish concept of tzedakah – righteousness and charity - Rosenwald used his fortune for numerous philanthropic activities, particularly to enhance the lives of African Americans. After his introduction to Booker T. Washington in 1911, Julius Rosenwald joined the Board of Trustees of the Tuskegee Institute and contributed to a pilot program to build six schools in rural Alabama for African American children who were receiving little to no education. Rosenwald's donations were matched by the local African American communities that were committed to providing education for their children.

The success of the pilot program led to the construction of over 5,300 Rosenwald Schools and related buildings over a 20-year period (1912-1932) in fifteen southern states under the direction of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The schools were the result of a 3-way partnership among the Julius Rosenwald Fund, local communities which, although generally poor, contributed land, labor, materials and money to build and maintain the schools, and local governments that were required by law to provide public schools for all their children but divided their funds unequally between black and white systems. The schools often became the focus of great pride and affection among the communities.

A 2011 study by two Federal Reserve economists concluded that these schools played a significant role in narrowing the gap between the educational levels of black and white students in the South. Rep. John Lewis and poet Maya Angelou are two prominent graduates of Rosenwald Schools. Rosenwald contributed to numerous other worthy causes. His offer to help underwrite YMCAs for African Americans led to the construction of more than 20 such facilities across the nation. He also

funded Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry and played a pivotal role in the creation of the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago and contributed to other Jewish and Chicago-based charities.

We request that you sponsor and push for passage legislation authorizing the Special Resource Study.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

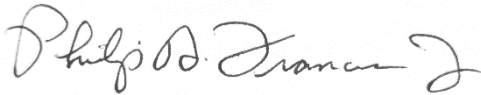
Sincerely yours,



Theresa Pierno, President & CEO  
National Parks Conservation Association



Stephanie K Meeks, President and CEO  
National Trust for Historic Preservation



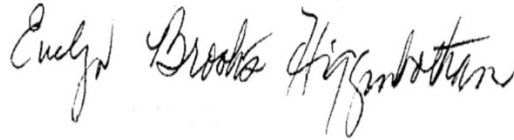
Phil Francis, Chair  
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks



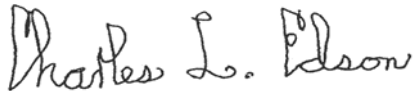
M. Howard Morse, President  
Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington



Steven B Nasatir, President  
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago



Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Ph.D., President  
Association for the Study of African American  
Life and History



Charles L. Edson, Chairman  
Maryland Historical Trust Board of Trustees



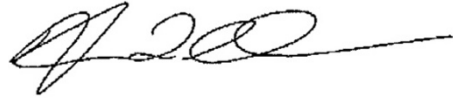
Donna S. Gloeckner, Director of Archives  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.



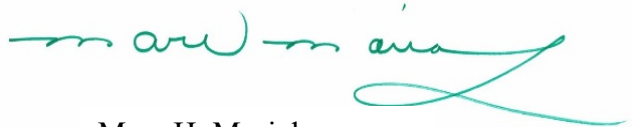
Rabbi Seth M. Limmer  
Chicago Sinai Congregation, Senior Rabbi



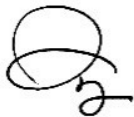
Dr. Michael, L. Lomax, President & CEO  
United Negro College Fund



Dr. Harry L. Williams  
President & CEO  
Thurgood Marshall College Fund



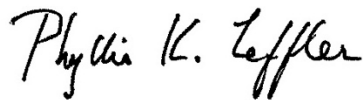
Marc H. Morial  
President & CEO  
National Urban League



Ivy L. Barksy  
CEO and Gwen Goodman Director  
National Museum of American Jewish History



President  
Scrabble School Preservation Foundation



President  
Southern Jewish Historical Society