

Liberty Fund D.C. Says Sen. John McCain Cosponsors Memorial to Black Patriots

Arizona Senator cosponsors bipartisan bill to preserve National Mall site

Washington, D.C. (April 24, 2008) – National Mall Liberty Fund D.C., (www.libertyfunddc.org) announced today that Senator John McCain has joined Senator Chris Dodd, Senator Charles Grassley, Senator Elizabeth Dole and Senator Barack Obama as a cosponsor of the National Liberty Memorial Act, S. 1051, on the anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

The bill would authorize a memorial to thousands of black soldiers, patriots and freedom-seekers of the Revolutionary War.

“I am delighted that Senator John McCain, a descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier, recognizes the importance of the contributions of African Americans to the nation’s founding,” said Maurice Barboza, the Fund’s founder and CEO. “The memorial will tell Americans of all backgrounds that we are bound together by enduring principles that transcend race and other factors that tend to divide us.”

Barboza, who is black, also has ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War. Like Senator McCain, he is a member of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). About 30 African Americans have joined the organization since he became a member in 1980. Another 30 black women may belong to the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Thousands of others may be eligible.

Rep. Donald Payne and the entire Congressional Black Caucus introduced a companion bill, H.R. 1693, in the House. Hearings were held before the Senate Energy Committee and House Natural Resources Committee. The sponsors are optimistic that the legislation will be approved by the Fourth of July.

Most Revolutionary War soldiers were average citizens -- not unlike the makeup of today’s population. “Any person we pass on the street -- whether black, white, Native American, Hispanic, or Asian -- could be descended from a Revolutionary War patriot,” Barboza explained. Women and children also confronted grave risks and performed patriotic acts.

Senator Grassley is also a member of the SAR while Senator Dole is a member of the DAR. Barboza said that he confirmed the eligibility of Senator Obama for SAR membership after discovering a rare document that had eluded researchers for generations. Last year, after an application was prepared for his signature, Barboza and the president of the Iowa Society SAR invited him to join the SAR.

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