

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Markup Memorandum

July 6, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp and Holly Baker
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x67736)

Mark-Up: **H.R. 5613 (Rep. Kevin Yoder)**, To designate the Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, as a National Historic Landmark, and for other purposes.
July 11, 2018, 10:15 am; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 5613, “*Quindaro Townsite National Historic Landmark Act*”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 5613, introduced by Representative Kevin Yoder (R-KS-03), would designate the Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, as a National Historic Landmark.

Cosponsors

Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay [D-MO-01]
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver [D-MO-05]
Rep. Ron Estes [R-KS-04]
Rep. Lynn Jenkins [R-KS-02]
Rep. Roger W. Marshall [R-KS-01]

Background

H.R. 5613 would designate the Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, as a National Historic Landmark. The Quindaro Townsite is on the National Register of Historic Places (listed in 2002), and is part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. The site preserves the ruins of a frontier town on the Missouri River, which was founded in 1857 to be a free-state port of entry during the Kansas Territory’s fight over the question of slavery. Other prominent river towns in the Territory at that time were pro-slavery. The town’s residents included euro-Americans, freed African Americans, and members of the Wyandot Tribe.¹

¹ National Register of Historic Place Registration Form for Quindaro Townsite. April 5, 2002.

https://www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/nominationsNRDB/WyandotteCounty_QuindaroTownsiteNR.pdf

The Quindaro area was the location of an African American refugee settlement that began during the Civil War. It was also the site of the Freedman's University and its successor institution, Western University, the first black university in Kansas.²

National Historic Landmarks are the most renowned historic properties in our nation and possess the highest integrity of all properties on the National Register of Historic Places. National Historic Landmarks must meet specific criteria and the nomination process relies on the extensive expertise of specialists in the field to verify the integrity and national significance of proposed sites.³ Nominations of potential landmarks are evaluated by the National Park Service Landmarks Committee and the National Park System Advisory Board with recommendations made to the Secretary of the Interior for final determination. The nomination process includes public comment periods and informing local stakeholders about the effects of designation. Property owners must agree to the designation.⁴

In 2017, in response to an inquiry letter from a local stakeholder regarding potential National Historic Landmark status, the National Park Service recommended that Quindaro supporters expand research of the site to identify possible national significance and then submit a comprehensive National Historic Landmark nomination package. The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area secured a contractor to prepare such a nomination for submission to the National Historic Landmarks Committee and National Park System Advisory Board.

It is rare for National Historic Landmarks to be designated by Congress. The most recent example came in 2004 through enactment of Public Law 108-209, which established Fort Bayard as an National Historic Landmark. More frequently, Congress has directed the Secretary of the Interior to study a site's eligibility for designation as an National Historic Landmark.⁵

A companion bill, S. 2895, has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS).

The Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 5613 on June 21, 2018.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

Unknown.

Anticipated Amendments

² *Id.*

³ *National Historic Landmarks Program* website, National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/nhl/>

⁴ "Designation of National Historic Landmarks" 36 CFR 65.5.

⁵ See Public Law 110-229 (sec. 324); Public Law 111-11 (sec. 7001); Public Law 113-291 (sec. 3033).

Chairman Bishop will offer an amendment designating the Quindaro Townsite as a National Commemorative Site. The amendment will also ensure the protection of the rights of private property owners and prevent the Secretary of the Interior from acquiring land for the site through condemnation.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.