

## Hanna, Harris Introduce Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act in House

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Representative Richard Hanna (NY-24)** today co-sponsored a bill introduced by Representative Andy Harris (MD-01) to establish The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park co-located in Maryland and New York.

The Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act would establish a Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in New York and a Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Maryland once the National Park Service (NPS) obtains sufficient property at each of the proposed sites to constitute manageable park units.

"Harriet Tubman was an incredible American, woman and humanitarian," Rep. Hanna said. "It is only right that we honor and celebrate her life in an appropriate way. Since coming to Congress, I've worked to make that happen and make this a reality for the city of Auburn. This bill is a big step toward that goal."

"I look forward to working with Congressman Harris, and the entire New York and Maryland delegations to make these parks for Harriet Tubman a reality."

The bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with entities for the historic preservation, restoration, interpretation, and maintenance of the parks. The bill also requires the Secretary to complete a general management plan for them.

This is companion legislation to bill S. 247 introduced by U.S. Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland.

The National Historical Park in Maryland will trace Tubman's early life on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where she was born and later escaped from slavery to become one of the leaders on the Underground Railroad. The National Historical Park in New York will be located in Auburn and commemorates the later years of her life where she was active in the women's suffrage movement and in providing for the welfare of aged African Americans.

In New York, the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park would include important historical structures in Auburn, including Tubman's home, the Home for the Aged that she established, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, and the Fort Hill Cemetery where she is buried.

To facilitate consideration in the House, and in keeping with House rules and protocol, the bill does not authorize new federal appropriations, but allows for state, local, and private funds to be used to finance the parks.

Auburn Mayor Michael D. Quill said he welcomes the legislation.

"Our community strongly supports this park initiative, particularly in advance of the 2013 Centennial of Ms. Tubman's death," Mayor Quill said. "The park would be a significant cultural and economic resource for Cayuga County, and the City of Auburn. Auburn is proud to have been her home for some 50 years, and the site of her final resting place. We look forward to sharing the legacy of a National heroine with a great number of tourists, students, and all those that would benefit from a National Park in the Finger Lakes Region."

Guy Cosentino, Executive Director of The Stardust Foundation in Auburn, thanked Hanna for pushing this bill to be introduced. The Foundation and its Board are very supportive of establishing a Tubman Park in Auburn.

"We are grateful for Congressman Hanna's leadership in getting this legislation introduced and his work to make sure that Harriet Tubman's life story gets national attention," Cosentino said. "Congressman Hanna has been a staunch supporter of this effort and has shown a willingness to go out of his way to meet with local supporters in Washington and in our District to make a national historical park a reality. He knows this can not only be a way to recognize her work, but create jobs and tourism opportunities."

The Maryland portion of the park would be located in Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties.

"These parks would honor the significant legacy and achievements of one America's most important African American leaders," Rep. Harris said. "The park will provide a wonderful opportunity to observe the historic landscape surrounding Maryland's portion of the Underground Railroad. I eagerly anticipate working with Congressman Hanna and the members of the Maryland and New York delegations to help advance this important piece of legislation."