



October 29, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural  
Resources  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

As organizations devoted to the promotion of America’s commitment to historic preservation, we write to express our support for S. 4550, the Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Act.

Establishing the national heritage area would provide critical recognition and funding to preserve the history of the African-American experience in Chicago. Because the development of Bronzeville is so intertwined with major events in American history, including slavery, the civil war, emancipation, Reconstruction, and the struggle for civil rights, it is vital to presenting a full picture of the American story.

Beginning as a home to many escaped enslaved individuals and families from the Upper South in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood has had a unique and compelling story. Bronzeville is a vibrant African American community, which grew as a result of the massive influx of new residents who arrived from the South during the Great Migration, starting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A hub for African American businesses, and home to some of America’s greatest entertainers, intellectuals, and writers, Bronzeville has earned a special place in American history that warrants status as a national heritage area.

The Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area Act will also benefit historic preservation as the proposed heritage area includes the Civil War-era Camp Douglas, a Union Army-run prisoner of war camp. Archaeological research at this site is ongoing and presents a valuable opportunity for telling the story about this aspect of our nation’s history.

We urge the committee to report S. 4550 favorably to the Senate.

Sincerely,

Coalition for American Heritage  
American Anthropological Association  
Archaeological Institute of America  
Heritage Ohio  
Illinois Archaeological Survey  
Landmarks Illinois  
Save Our Heritage Organisation  
Society for Historical Archaeology