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**Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee**

Agenda

Implementation of Policy Statement on Burial Grounds, Human Remains, and Funerary Objects  
Regarding African American Burial Sites

*Please see the following papers in Tab 1 for the Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee discussion:*

Proposed ACHP Action on Legislative Priorities: Preservation Funding and Tax Incentives

Proposed ACHP Action on Legislative Priorities: National Defense Authorization Act

Chair's Initiative on Government-wide Program Comments



**MEETING**  
**POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, July 10, 2024**  
**3 p.m.–4:30 p.m. EDT**

Join ZoomGov Meeting

<https://achp.zoomgov.com/j/1618524605?pwd=MStzSzA3UVFiUWdVa092MFUvT3I3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 161 852 4605

Passcode: 780302

Dial-in: (646) 828-7666

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

- I. Introductions
- II. ACHP Comments on Legislation
  - A. Preservation Funding and Tax Incentives
  - B. National Defense Authorization Act
- III. Policy Issues Related to Chair’s Initiative on Government-wide Program Comments
- IV. Implementation of Policy Statement on Burial Grounds, Human Remains, and Funerary Objects Regarding African American Burial Sites
- V. Updates and Other Business

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY STATEMENT  
ON BURIAL GROUNDS, HUMAN REMAINS, AND FUNERARY OBJECTS  
REGARDING AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL SITES  
Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs**

**Background.** The ACHP's 2023 [Policy Statement on Burial Sites, Human Remains, and Funerary Objects](#) establishes principles to guide federal and state agencies, contractors, and other relevant entities to assist them in providing burial sites, human remains, and funerary objects the consideration and protection they deserve. While the policy is broadly applicable, the burial sites, human remains, and funerary objects of certain groups of people have a higher probability of being unmarked and undocumented and thus more likely to be affected by development projects. This is the case for Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians, and other Indigenous Peoples, and also for enslaved Africans and their descendants.

To better learn how the ACHP might work to advance the policy in support of the protection and proper treatment of burial sites, human remains, and funerary objects of significance to the African American community, in June the ACHP invited thought leaders on protecting African American burials to meet with Chair Sara Bronin and staff to share their ideas. The issues discussed and input received are summarized below.

**Invited Participants at the Listening Session.** The following invited attendees were welcomed by Chair Bronin and ACHP Member Carmen Jordan-Cox.

- Michael Blakey, Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies, and American Studies, William & Mary
- Vedet Coleman-Robinson, Executive Director, Association of African American Museums
- Joseph Diamond, Associate Professor of Anthropology, SUNY New Paltz
- Lawana Holland-Moore, Director of Fellowships and Interpretive Strategies, National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund
- Delande Justinvil, Doctoral Student, American University
- Madeline Konz, Supervisory Grants Management Specialist, National Park Service State, Tribal, Local, Plans & Grants Division
- Ken Nystrom, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, SUNY New Paltz
- Rachel Watkins, Associate Professor of Anthropology, American University
- Hampton Tucker, Business Manager, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science, National Park Service

**Summary of Feedback Received.** The discussion focused on three topical areas, including the role of state and local governments; developers and private landowners; and consultation and consensus. Participants revealed a series of challenges associated with African American burial sites including vandalism; desecration; encroachment; neglect; impacts of climate change; issues of access by descendants on privately owned land; lack of informed consent by descendant communities in decision making for sites; and severed community connections to burial sites due to historic events, including the Great Migration and the challenges associated with ancestral identification brought about by slavery.

Beyond working to ensure that descendant communities always are part of Section 106 consultations involving African American burials, participants offered the following specific suggestions for ACHP actions.

- Submit a letter to Congress in support of funding for the African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program.
- Develop model legislation for states and local governments regarding the treatment of burial sites in their jurisdictions.
- Issue guidance for federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Officers, local governments, and preservation advocates regarding consideration of African American burial sites during Section 106 review and what technical assistance and resources are available to assist in their preservation.

***Advocating for the African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program.*** The ACHP could take immediate action to support FY 2025 congressional funding of the fledgling United States African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program. Authorized in FY 2023, the program is to be administered by the National Park Service and will provide competitive grants and technical assistance to local partners to research, identify, survey, and preserve African American cemeteries. The program is authorized to receive \$3 million a year through 2027; however, despite a request in the President's Budget, Congress did not appropriate such funding in FY 2024. Please see the Tab 1 paper, "Proposed ACHP Action on Legislative Priorities: Preservation Funding and Tax Incentives," for a suggested motion whereby the ACHP would support funding for the program in the FY 2025 budget.

***Action Needed.*** The Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee is asked to consider the feedback received and discuss possible short-term and long-term next steps. The committee should discuss whether to recommend at the business meeting advising Congress of ACHP support for funding the United States African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program in FY 2025.

*July 2, 2024*