P.L. 2020, CHAPTER 91, ***approved September 17, 2020***
Assembly Committee Substitute for
Assembly, No. 3201

AN ACT recognizing the Howell House on Lafayette Street in Cape May, New Jersey as the Harriet Tubman Museum in New Jersey and supplementing chapter 9A of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

WHEREAS, The Macedonia Baptist Church was officially recognized as a Baptist church by the West New Jersey Baptist Association on December 23, 1895 and was organized to provide a place for African-American residents of the city of Cape May to practice their faith together; and

WHEREAS, The Macedonia Baptist Church continues to meet today in its historic church building, part of which dates back to 1799, on the corner of Lafayette and Franklin Streets, in a neighborhood that contains most of Cape May's civic institutions, and that was the core of the city's African-American society for much of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, Next to the church stands one of Cape May's oldest houses, the Howell House, which was built in 1850 and willed to the church in 1909 by its former owner, Philadelphia Quaker Joseph Howell, and has been used as a parsonage until only a few decades ago; and

WHEREAS, The house has been acknowledged as "a contributing resource to the Cape May National Historic Landmark district," and in 2012, was declared one of New Jersey's top-10 endangered historic structures by Preservation New Jersey, a Statewide private historic preservation organization; and

WHEREAS, On December 16, 2018, the church signed a lease with developers Robert and Zack Mullock that permitted the Mullocks to renovate the Howell House into a museum honoring Harriet Tubman, which opened virtually on June 19, 2020, a date recognized as "Juneteenth" to commemorate the announcement by Union Army General Gordon Granger of federal orders that enslaved persons in Texas were free; and

WHEREAS, The museum showcases Harriet Tubman's role as a champion of civil rights and the time she spent in Cape May in the 1850s earning income to support her efforts in the Underground Railroad, a network of safe houses designed to help African-American slaves escape into free territories; and

WHEREAS, Given New Jersey's role in allowing safe passage for many on the Underground Railroad and the significance of Harriet Tubman's contribution to the freedom of dozens of people, supported by her time in Cape May, it is altogether

fitting and proper that this State recognize the Howell House on Lafayette Street in Cape May, New Jersey as the Harriet Tubman Museum in New Jersey; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Howell House on Lafayette Street in Cape May, New Jersey is recognized as the Harriet Tubman Museum in New Jersey.

2. State and other public funds shall not be used for producing, purchasing, or erecting signs bearing the designation established under section 1 this act, P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). The Governor, or the designee thereof, is authorized to receive gifts, grants, or other financial assistance from private sources for the purpose of funding or reimbursing the Governor, or the designee thereof, for the costs associated with producing, purchasing, and erecting signs bearing the designation established under section 1 of this act and entering into agreements related thereto, with private sources, including but not limited to non-governmental, non-profit, educational, or charitable entities or institutions. Work shall not proceed and funding shall not be accepted by the Governor, or the designee thereof, until an agreement has been reached with a responsible party for paying the costs associated with producing, purchasing, erecting, and maintaining the signs.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Recognizes Howell House in Cape May as Harriet Tubman Museum in New Jersey.