

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, No. 2585

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED JULY 22, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator RONALD L. RICE

District 28 (Essex)

Senator MICHAEL L. TESTA, JR.

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Singleton, Pou and Ruiz

SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Substitute as adopted by the Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism & Historic Preservation Committee.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 8/27/2020)

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

5
6 **WHEREAS**, The Macedonia Baptist Church was officially
7 recognized as a Baptist church by the West New Jersey Baptist
8 Association on December 23, 1895 and was organized to
9 provide a place for African-American residents of the city of
10 Cape May to practice their faith together; and

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

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

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

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

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

39 **WHEREAS**, Given New Jersey's role in allowing safe passage for
40 many on the Underground Railroad and the significance of
41 Harriet Tubman's contribution to the freedom of dozens of
42 people, supported by her time in Cape May, it is altogether
43 fitting and proper that this State recognize the Howell House on
44 Lafayette Street in Cape May, New Jersey as the Harriet
45 Tubman Museum in New Jersey; now, therefore,

46
47 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
48 *of New Jersey:*

- 1 1. The Howell House on Lafayette Street in Cape May, New
2 Jersey is recognized as the Harriet Tubman Museum in New Jersey.
3
- 4 2. State and other public funds shall not be used for producing,
5 purchasing, or erecting signs bearing the designation established
6 under section 1 this act, P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
7 Legislature as this bill). The Governor, or the designee thereof, is
8 authorized to receive gifts, grants, or other financial assistance from
9 private sources for the purpose of funding or reimbursing the
10 Governor, or the designee thereof, for the costs associated with
11 producing, purchasing, and erecting signs bearing the designation
12 established under section 1 of this act and entering into agreements
13 related thereto, with private sources, including but not limited to
14 non-governmental, non-profit, educational, or charitable entities or
15 institutions. Work shall not proceed and funding shall not be
16 accepted by the Governor, or the designee thereof, until an
17 agreement has been reached with a responsible party for paying the
18 costs associated with producing, purchasing, erecting, and
19 maintaining the signs.
20
- 21 3. This act shall take effect immediately.