

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 544

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of alternatives for commemorating and interpreting the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in the early years of the National Parks, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 10, 2011

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of alternatives for commemorating and interpreting the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in the early years of the National Parks, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Buffalo Soldiers in  
5       the National Parks Study Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7       (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

1           (1) In the late 19th century and early 20th cen-  
2 tury, African-American troops who came to be  
3 known as the Buffalo Soldiers served in many crit-  
4 ical roles in the western United States, including  
5 protecting some of the first National Parks.

6           (2) Based at the Presidio in San Francisco,  
7 Buffalo Soldiers were assigned to Sequoia and Yo-  
8 semite National Parks where they patrolled the  
9 backcountry, built trails, stopped poaching, and oth-  
10 erwise served in the roles later assumed by National  
11 Park rangers.

12           (3) The public would benefit from having op-  
13 portunities to learn more about the Buffalo Soldiers  
14 in the National Parks and their contributions to the  
15 management of National Parks and the legacy of Af-  
16 rican-Americans in the post-Civil War era.

17           (4) As the centennial of the National Park  
18 Service in 2016 approaches, it is an especially ap-  
19 propriate time to conduct research and increase pub-  
20 lic awareness of the stewardship role the Buffalo  
21 Soldiers played in the early years of the National  
22 Parks.

23           (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to author-  
24 ize a study to determine the most effective ways to in-  
25 crease understanding and public awareness of the critical

1 role that the Buffalo Soldiers played in the early years  
2 of the National Parks.

3 **SEC. 3. STUDY.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall  
5 conduct a study of alternatives for commemorating and  
6 interpreting the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in the early  
7 years of the National Parks.

8 (b) CONTENTS OF STUDY.—The study shall in-  
9 clude—

10 (1) a historical assessment, based on extensive  
11 research, of the Buffalo Soldiers who served in Na-  
12 tional Parks in the years prior to the establishment  
13 of the National Park Service;

14 (2) an evaluation of the suitability and feasi-  
15 bility of establishing a national historic trail com-  
16 memorating the route traveled by the Buffalo Sol-  
17 diers from their post in the Presidio of San Fran-  
18 cisco to Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks and  
19 to any other National Parks where they may have  
20 served;

21 (3) the identification of properties that could  
22 meet criteria for listing in the National Register of  
23 Historic Places or criteria for designation as Na-  
24 tional Historic Landmarks;

1           (4) an evaluation of appropriate ways to en-  
2           hance historical research, education, interpretation,  
3           and public awareness of the story of the Buffalo Sol-  
4           diers' stewardship role in the National Parks, in-  
5           cluding ways to link the story to the development of  
6           National Parks and the story of African-American  
7           military service following the Civil War; and

8           (5) any other matters that the Secretary of the  
9           Interior deems appropriate for this study.

10          (c) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after funds are  
11          made available for the study, the Secretary of the Interior  
12          shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of  
13          the House of Representatives and the Committee on En-  
14          ergy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report con-  
15          taining the study's findings and recommendations.

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