May 3, 2018

The Honorable James Clyburn
242 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Clyburn:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation enthusiastically supports H.R. 5532, the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park Act, which would redesignate and expand the Reconstruction Era National Monument, and establish the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to permanently protect sites of cultural and historic significance that tell a fuller American story.

We were excited when President Obama designated the Reconstruction Era National Monument—spanning five different sites across Beaufort County, South Carolina—to commemorate the stories of African Americans in the South immediately following the Civil War. We appreciate your continued focus on this significant yet underrepresented part of our nation’s history by seeking both to expand the designation and elevate it within the National Park System.

We support boundary adjustments and provisions to include historically relevant places in the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District, on St. Helena Island, and at Camp Saxton that will further illuminate the successes and struggles of African Americans in the decades following the Civil War.

Furthermore, the proposed Reconstruction Era National Historic Network will allow for continued preservation and interpretation of sites beyond Beaufort County that are important to our understanding of the Reconstruction Era. In addition to our support of the newly established African American Civil Rights Network Act and the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, the National Trust endorses your legislation to create partnerships and programming that will enhance public understanding of this important era in American history.

Once again, we applaud your steadfast leadership in protecting our nationally significant and diverse cultural and historic sites and ensuring they reflect and celebrate our shared American story. Thank you for striving to protect these
special places so that future generations can continue to benefit and learn from our national treasures.

With warm regards,

Stephanie K. Meeks

cc: Congressman Mark Sanford