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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

H. F. No. 2833

03/26/2025 Authored by Hussein, Hollins, Frazier, Agbaje, Momanyi-Hiltsley and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on State Government Finance and Policy

A bill for an act

relating to state government; requiring the commemoration of John Francis Wheaton on the Capitol complex; requiring community and educational initiatives and annual reports; appropriating money.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **PURPOSE AND FINDINGS.**

Subdivision 1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this act is to recognize the historic contributions of John Francis "J. Frank" Wheaton, the first African American elected to the Minnesota legislature, by requiring a commemorative work in his honor on the State Capitol grounds. This work will serve as a lasting tribute to Representative Wheaton's legacy in advancing civil rights, racial justice, and public service in Minnesota.

Subd. 2. **Findings.** The legislature finds that:

(1) John Francis Wheaton was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1898 and served from 1899 to 1901;

(2) Representative Wheaton was a strong advocate for civil rights, education, and economic opportunities for African Americans in Minnesota;

(3) Representative Wheaton's leadership paved the way for future African American legislators and civic leaders in the state; and

(4) establishing a permanent tribute to Representative Wheaton at the Minnesota State Capitol will educate the public and inspire future generations.

Sec. 2. **DESIGN AND INSTALLATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Design process.** The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board must conduct the commemorative works process pursuant to Minnesota Rules, part 2400.2703, and the commissioner of administration must install a commemorative work honoring John Francis Wheaton. The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board must issue a public call for artists to ensure an inclusive design process that reflects Wheaton's historical significance. When selecting the final design, the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board must consult community leaders, civil rights organizations, historians, and Representative Wheaton's descendants or representatives from the African American community.

Subd. 2. **Progress report.** The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, in consultation with the commissioner of administration, must provide an annual report to the legislature on the status of the project that addresses project progress, including but not limited to project design, funding, and community engagement efforts.

Subd. 3. **Completion timeline.** The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board must complete the design and site selection phases by December 31, 2026, and the commissioner of administration must complete the installation phase by December 31, 2027.

Sec. 3. **EDUCATIONAL, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES.**

Subdivision 1. **Educational curriculum and public awareness.** The commissioner of education must develop educational materials about John Francis Wheaton's contributions to be incorporated into Minnesota history curricula in primary and secondary schools. The materials must include digital resources, lesson plans, and documentary content for classroom use.

Subd. 2. **Historical and cultural programs.** The Minnesota Historical Society, in partnership with African American cultural organizations, must:

(1) develop programming, including lectures, exhibits, and panel discussions, to highlight Wheaton's impact; and

(2) establish and promote an annual "J. Frank Wheaton Legacy Day" to commemorate his contributions and encourage civic engagement, particularly among young people.

Sec. 4. **FORMAL DEDICATION CEREMONY.**

Upon completion of the commemorative work required under this act, the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board must host an official dedication ceremony at the Minnesota

State Capitol and invite the governor, legislators, representatives of the African American community, educators, historians, and the general public to participate. The ceremony must include historical reflections on Representative Wheaton's legacy, student presentations, and community-led discussions on representation in government.

Sec. 5. **APPROPRIATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board.** $..... in fiscal year 2026 is appropriated from the general fund to the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board for purposes of this act. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2028.

Subd. 2. **Department of Administration.** $..... in fiscal year 2026 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of administration for purposes of this act. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2028.

Sec. 6. **EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This act is effective the day following final enactment.