

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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## STATE OF ALABAMA

June 15, 2015

Mr. Jon Jarvis  
Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Jarvis:

I am writing to express my strong support for a remarkable local effort to commemorate the 1961 Freedom Rides by preserving important historic sites in Anniston and Calhoun County, Alabama.

The City of Anniston, Calhoun County, federal and state elected officials, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), Jacksonville State University, Freedom Riders Park, local businesses, other partners, and original Freedom Riders are working together to add Freedom Rider sites to the National Park System.

I thank you for the recent decision by the National Park Service to conduct a survey of Freedom Rider sites which was requested by Senator Richard Shelby and state and local elected officials. I encourage the NPS to complete the survey on an expedited basis to provide an opportunity to designate the sites next year in conjunction with the NPS Centennial.

Designating Freedom Riders Park as part of the National Park System will provide a lasting educational and economic resource for the people of Alabama and the nation. Preserving Freedom Rider sites will tell the stories of strength, determination, pain, healing and reconciliation that define the civil rights movement in Alabama. The proposed Freedom Riders Park will honor the work and sacrifice of the Freedom Riders, who saw a better vision for our state and country. The park will also enable younger generations to learn about sacrifices made in the struggle to desegregate public accommodations and about the larger civil rights movement.

In addition, the proposed park will create jobs and economic activity for local communities by attracting visitors from across the country and internationally and promoting the redevelopment of downtown Anniston.

As I noted in my remarks earlier this year in Selma, "Alabama is a place where neighbors love and care for one another and work together on issues that are important to us all." My administration looks forward to working together to leave a lasting legacy for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Bentley".

Robert Bentley  
Governor