



## CITY OF ANNISTON

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June 16, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the City of Anniston, I write to respectfully request your favorable consideration of a proposal to create Freedom Riders National Monument, as a unit of the National Park System, via your authority under the Antiquities Act.

In order to tell the important story of the Freedom Riders, the City, through community partnerships, has interpreted the former Greyhound bus station in downtown Anniston with informative murals as a part of the Anniston Civil Rights Trail. Additionally, the City will soon take ownership and initiate a refurbishment of the property with the intention of offering it as a donation to the National Park Service.

The bus station is the site of a May 1961 attack on the Freedom Riders aboard the Greyhound bus that was firebombed a few miles down the road. The May 1961 attacks on Freedom Riders shocked the nation and marked a key turning point in the fight against segregation. The Freedom Riders featured African American and white citizens working together to help enforce U.S. Supreme Court decisions via non-violent means. Thanks to the courage of the Freedom Riders, the Kennedy Administration banned segregation through regulations issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Our community has a rich and diverse history marking African American advancement and major steps forward in America's struggle for Civil Rights. In a 1963 letter, President Kennedy recognized Anniston's leadership in creating a biracial Human Relations Council, "Your action is a sensible one, and one that should serve as a model for the United States." By creating a National Monument in Anniston, you have an opportunity to honor the Freedom Riders, who risked their lives in 1961 to overturn Jim Crow laws, and to highlight Anniston's efforts to move forward as a community. The City supports the efforts of Calhoun County to preserve the site of the Greyhound bus burning along Alabama Highway 202 to complement our work.

The proposed Freedom Riders National Monument would tell the story of those who fought for Civil Rights, benefit the City of Anniston, inspire young people and leave a lasting legacy for future generations. The City greatly appreciates your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with your Administration in support of this historic opportunity to protect our nation's heritage and promote racial healing and reconciliation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Vaughn M. Stewart, II

cc: The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior  
The Honorable Jonathan Jarvis, Director, National Park Service  
Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director, Council on Environmental Quality