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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2     An act relating to the National Statuary Hall;  
3     requesting the Joint Committee on the Library of  
4     Congress to approve the replacement of the statue of  
5     Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith in the National  
6     Statuary Hall Collection with a statue of Mary McLeod  
7     Bethune; providing for the transfer of ownership of  
8     the statue of General Edmund Kirby Smith to the state;  
9     requiring the Division of Cultural Affairs of the  
10    Department of State to take possession of the statue  
11    and make available for public display; providing that  
12    the act is an official request to the Joint Committee  
13    on the Library of Congress; requiring the Department  
14    of State to deliver copies of the act to certain  
15    persons on the act's effective date; providing an  
16    effective date.

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18           WHEREAS, in March 2016, the Florida Legislature passed, and  
19    the Governor signed into law, Senate Bill 310, authorizing the  
20    replacement of the statue of Confederate General Edmund Kirby  
21    Smith in the National Statuary Hall Collection with a statue of  
22    a prominent Florida citizen recommended by the ad hoc committee  
23    of the Great Floridians Program within the Division of  
24    Historical Resources of the Department of State, and

25           WHEREAS, one of the three prominent Florida citizens  
26    recommended by the ad hoc committee is Mary McLeod Bethune, and

27           WHEREAS, Mary McLeod Bethune was born on July 10, 1875, in  
28    Mayesville, South Carolina, and she was the first member of her  
29    family, including all of her 16 siblings, born free following

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30 the conclusion of the Civil War, and

31 WHEREAS, beginning at a young age, Mary McLeod Bethune  
32 became engaged with learning and teaching after receiving an  
33 opportunity to attend Trinity Presbyterian Mission School in her  
34 hometown, and her dedication was evidenced through attending as  
35 many classes as she could and teaching her parents and siblings  
36 what she had learned, and

37 WHEREAS, Mary McLeod Bethune was awarded a scholarship  
38 allowing her to enroll at the then-Scotia Seminary for Girls in  
39 Concord, North Carolina, from which she graduated in 1893, and  
40 she went on to continue her studies at the Moody Bible Institute  
41 in Chicago, and

42 WHEREAS, upon graduating from the Moody Bible Institute,  
43 Mary McLeod Bethune became a teacher and taught at schools in  
44 Georgia and South Carolina before moving to Florida to teach at  
45 the Palatka Mission School, and

46 WHEREAS, through observing the burgeoning black population  
47 in the area prompted by labor needed for railroad construction,  
48 Mary McLeod Bethune decided to follow through with her dream of  
49 opening her own school, and

50 WHEREAS, Mary McLeod Bethune bought a small cottage in  
51 Daytona Beach to allow for the opening of the Daytona Literary  
52 and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls in 1904 and  
53 through her commitment to fundraising, the school's enrollment  
54 grew from 5 to 250 students in just 2 years, and

55 WHEREAS, the school continued to grow, which eventually  
56 resulted in its merger with the Cookman Institute for Men in  
57 Jacksonville to form Bethune-Cookman College, where she later  
58 served as president, and

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59 WHEREAS, Mary McLeod Bethune's advocacy continued with her  
60 founding of the National Council of Negro Women and her  
61 appointment as Director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the  
62 National Youth Administration by President Franklin Delano  
63 Roosevelt, and

64 WHEREAS, through her position as the highest ranking  
65 African-American woman in the Federal Government, Mary McLeod  
66 Bethune was able to assist African-American youth in finding  
67 employment and worked with the Women's Army Corps during World  
68 War II to recruit African-American female officers, and

69 WHEREAS, upon her death in 1955, Mary McLeod Bethune's  
70 inspirational leadership was praised by many, including former  
71 First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who lauded "her wisdom and her  
72 goodness," and

73 WHEREAS, in 1995, the United States National Park Service  
74 established the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National  
75 Historic Site in Washington, D.C., which has preserved the  
76 townhouse that was once her personal residence and the first  
77 headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women, and

78 WHEREAS, Mary McLeod Bethune's legacy continues to be felt  
79 in Florida through the continued success of Bethune-Cookman  
80 University, whose enrollment is currently approaching a record  
81 high of 4,000 students, and

82 WHEREAS, it is appropriate to honor Mary McLeod Bethune as  
83 one of two Floridians memorialized in statues in the National  
84 Statuary Hall Collection given her significant and continuing  
85 impact on this state, NOW, THEREFORE,

86  
87 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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89       Section 1. The Legislature of the State of Florida hereby  
90 respectfully requests the Joint Committee on the Library of  
91 Congress to approve the replacement of the statue of Confederate  
92 General Edmund Kirby Smith in the National Statuary Hall  
93 Collection with a statue of Mary McLeod Bethune. Contingent upon  
94 such approval by the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress,  
95 ownership of the statue of General Edmund Kirby Smith shall  
96 transfer to the state in accordance with 2 U.S.C. s. 2132(d).  
97 The Division of Cultural Affairs of the Department of State  
98 shall take possession of the returned statue, and make the  
99 statue available for public display.

100       Section 2. This act shall serve as an official request to  
101 the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress pursuant to 2  
102 U.S.C. s. 2132.

103       Section 3. On the effective date of this act, the  
104 Department of State shall deliver a copy of this act to the  
105 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United  
106 States House of Representatives, the Joint Committee on the  
107 Library of Congress, and to each member of the Florida  
108 delegation to the United States Congress.

109       Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.