1	A bill to be entitled
2	An act relating to abandoned cemeteries; creating the
3	Task Force on Abandoned African-American Cemeteries;
4	specifying the purpose of the task force; requiring
5	the Department of State to provide administrative and
6	staff support; specifying the composition of the task
7	force; providing meeting requirements; prescribing
8	duties of the task force; requiring the task force to
9	submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by
10	a specified date; providing for expiration of the task
11	force; providing an effective date.
12	
13	WHEREAS, until the conclusion of the Civil War, millions of
14	African Americans in the United States, including Florida, were
15	enslaved, and
16	WHEREAS, following the end of slavery, African Americans
17	continued to be subject to various discriminatory practices,
18	including restrictions on burying the dead, which resulted in
19	segregated cemeteries and burial grounds, and
20	WHEREAS, unlike predominantly white cemeteries and burial
21	grounds, African-American cemeteries and burial grounds were not
22	subject to regulations and recordkeeping necessary to protect
23	the dignity of the deceased, and
24	WHEREAS, as a result, many abandoned African-American
25	cemeteries and burial grounds have been inadvertently discovered

Page 1 of 5

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

26	following years of disrepair and neglect when land is being
27	redeveloped or has been sold, and
28	WHEREAS, to this day, abandoned African-American cemeteries
29	and burial grounds throughout this state continue to be
30	uncovered, as evidenced by recent reports regarding the former
31	Zion Cemetery site in the Tampa Heights neighborhood and the
32	former Ridgewood Cemetery on the grounds of C. Leon King High
33	School, both in the City of Tampa, and
34	WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes its obligation to
35	identify and properly record abandoned African-American
36	cemeteries and burial grounds in order to preserve history,
37	better inform development decisions, and ensure dignity and
38	respect for the deceased, NOW, THEREFORE,
39	
40	Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
41	
42	Section 1. (1) The Task Force on Abandoned African-
43	American Cemeteries, a task force as defined in s. 20.03(8),
44	Florida Statutes, is created adjunct to the Department of State
45	for the express purpose of studying the extent to which unmarked
46	or abandoned African-American cemeteries and burial grounds
47	exist throughout the state and developing and recommending
48	strategies for identifying and recording cemeteries and burial
49	grounds while also preserving local history and ensuring dignity
50	and respect for the deceased. Except as otherwise provided in

Page 2 of 5

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

FL	O R	ΙD	А	Н	0	U	S	E	0	F	R	Е	Ρ	R	Е	S	Е	Ν	Т	А	Т	Ι	V	Е	S
----	-----	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

51	this section, the task force shall operate in a manner
52	consistent with s. 20.052, Florida Statutes. The department
53	shall provide administrative and staff support relating to the
54	functions of the task force.
55	(2) The task force is composed of the following members:
56	(a) The Secretary of State, or his or her designee, who
57	shall serve as chair.
58	(b) A representative of the Bureau of Archaeological
59	Research of the Division of Historical Resources, appointed by
60	the Secretary of State.
61	(c) One person nominated by the President of the Florida
62	State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement
63	of Colored People and appointed by the Secretary of State.
64	(d) One representative of the Florida Council of Churches,
65	nominated by the executive director of the council and appointed
66	by the Secretary of State.
67	(e) One representative of the Florida African American
68	Heritage Preservation Network, nominated by the executive
69	director of the network and appointed by the Secretary of State.
70	(f) One representative of the Florida Public Archaeology
71	Network, appointed by the Secretary of State.
72	(g) One representative of the cemetery industry, appointed
73	by the Secretary of State.
74	(h) One member of the Senate, appointed by the President
75	of the Senate.

Page 3 of 5

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words <u>underlined</u> are additions.

One member of the House of Representatives, appointed 76 (i) 77 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. 78 One elected official from a local government, (j) 79 appointed by the Secretary of State. 80 (3) The task force shall hold its first meeting by August 81 1, 2021. The task force may meet as many times as it deems 82 necessary to complete the duties prescribed in this section. 83 The task force shall: (4) Review the findings and recommendations made by the 84 (a) 85 Task Force on Abandoned and Neglected Cemeteries created pursuant to chapter 98-268, Laws of Florida, and any legislative 86 87 or administrative action that was taken in response to the task 88 force's findings and recommendations. 89 (b) Examine the adequacy of current practices regarding 90 the preservation of unmarked and abandoned African-American cemeteries and burial grounds and identify any challenges unique 91 92 to African-American cemeteries and burial grounds. 93 Identify locations of unmarked and abandoned African-(C) American cemeteries and burial grounds throughout the state and 94 95 propose strategies, including any proposed legislation, for the 96 preservation and evaluation of such sites. 97 (d) Make recommendations regarding standards for the creation, placement, and maintenance of a memorial at any 98 identified locations of unmarked and abandoned African-American 99 100 cemeteries or burial grounds throughout the state.

Page 4 of 5

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

FLORIDA	HOUSE	OF REP	RESENTA	A T I V E S
---------	-------	--------	---------	-------------

2021

101	(5) By January 1, 2022, the task force shall submit a
102	report detailing its findings and recommendations to the
103	Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House
104	of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the
105	Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.
106	(6) This section expires March 11, 2022.
107	Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words <u>underlined</u> are additions.