

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Markup Memorandum

September 25, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp and Holly Baker (x67736)

Markup: **H. Res. 792 (Rep. Jose E. Serrano)**, urging the Secretary of the Interior to recognize the historical significance of Roberto Clemente’s place of death near Piñones in Loíza, Puerto Rico, by adding it to the National Register of Historic Places.

September 27, 2018, 10:15 am; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

Summary of the Bill

H. Res. 792, introduced by Representative Jose E. Serrano (D-NY-15), recognizes the importance of Roberto Clemente as a Major League baseball player, a humanitarian, and a role model for Puerto Ricans and Latinos in the United States, and requests that the Secretary of the Interior add Clemente’s place of death to the National Register of Historic Places.

Background

Roberto Clemente Walker was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico, in 1934. Clemente grew up playing baseball and truly loved the sport, beginning his professional career in the Puerto Rican League.¹ Clemente was drafted into the major leagues in 1954. He played 18 seasons for the Pittsburgh Pirates and became a legend in the sport. He won 12 Gold Gloves, 4 National League batting titles, 12 All-Star Game selections, 2 World Series Championships, and reached the 3,000-hit milestone.²

Perhaps equally as important as Clemente’s accomplishments on the field was his role as an advocate for equitable treatment of Latino baseball players.³ He saw his career in baseball as a way to help Latin Americans, especially underprivileged Puerto Ricans, make their lives better.⁴ Clemente spent much of his time during the off-season involved in charity work, frequently in Latin American countries and the Caribbean.⁵

¹ Thornley, Stew. “Roberto Clemente.” Society for American Baseball Research.

<https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/8b153bc4>

² “Beyond Baseball: The Life of Roberto Clemente.” Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

http://www.robertoclemente.si.edu/english/virtual_legacy.htm

³ Thornley, Stew. “Roberto Clemente.” Society for American Baseball Research.

<https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/8b153bc4>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

After a massive earthquake hit Nicaragua in late December 1972, Clemente headed up a relief effort and decided to accompany the supply plane. Shortly after takeoff from the San Juan airport on December 31, 1972, the plane crashed, killing Clemente.⁶

The Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, waived the rule requiring a five-year wait after retirement (or death) before a player could be elected to the Hall, and in July 1973 Clemente was the first player born in Latin America to be inducted into the national baseball shrine.⁷ The award presented annually to a Major League baseball player for exemplary sportsmanship and community service was renamed the Roberto Clemente Award in 1973.⁸ Clemente was posthumously awarded both the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.⁹



Photo credit: Getty Images

⁶ “Roberto Clemente.” National Baseball Hall of Fame. <https://baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/clemente-roberto>

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ “Roberto Clemente Award.” Major League Baseball website. http://m.mlb.com/awards/history-winners/?award_id=MLBRC&year=2014

⁹ “Roberto Walker Clemente Congressional Gold Medal.” History, Art & Archives. United States House of Representatives. <http://history.house.gov/HistoricalHighlight/Detail/35733>; “Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom.” George W. Bush. July 23, 2003. The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=64890>

To honor Roberto Clemente as the embodiment of a baseball legend, a great humanitarian and athlete, H. Res. 792 requests that the Secretary of the Interior recognize the crash site of Robert Clemente's airplane and the adjacent land by adding the site to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official federal government list of sites and structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical significance. It was created under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.).

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

Unknown.

Anticipated Amendments

None.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)

None.