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October 5, 2016

Elaine Hackett
National Parks Service
Chief State Tribal Local Plans & Grants Division
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Hackett,

I write to express my support and enthusiasm for the City of Memphis' African American Civil Rights Grant application for the historic Clayborn Temple. As we approach 50 years since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, it is appropriate to highlight the prominent role the City of Memphis plays in the story of Dr. King and civil rights in America.

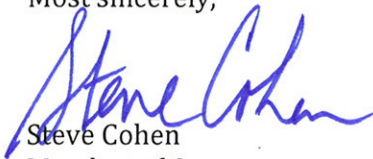
On February 12, 1968, Memphis Sanitation Workers went on strike after two African American sanitation workers died due to work-related injuries following years of discrimination and dangerous working conditions. Dr. King came to Memphis in support of their efforts at the height of his "Poor People's Campaign" and gave the first organizing speech of the sanitation workers strike at Clayborn Temple. Clayborn Temple became a hub of civil rights activity and the starting point for nightly marches to City Hall.

In addition to a rich African American civil rights history, the building is historically and architecturally significant and is on the National Register of Historic Places. After sitting vacant and exposed to the elements for many years, a group led by the nonprofit Neighborhood Preservation Inc. acquired Clayborn Temple in 2015 and have launched a campaign to restore the property, and to make Clayborn Temple a hub for the community and visitors to Memphis to learn about the Civil Rights Movement, engage with its legacy, and carry its lessons into the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress