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## MLK Commission Work Group #1: Virginians on the Monument

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Senate Room 1, Capitol  
Richmond, Virginia

Thursday, April 20, 2017  
2:00 P.M.

### SUMMARY

**Members present:** Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, *Chair*; Dr. Edward L. Ayers; Brenda H. Edwards; Dr. Gregg Kimball; Dr. Robert C. Vaughan, III; Charles Withers

The Virginians on the Monument Work Group (the Work Group) of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met to examine the full list of nominees submitted for inclusion on the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument (the Monument) and to discuss the process for selection of finalists. Submissions for all nominees were received between September 1, 2016, and March 31, 2017. Dr. Gregg Kimball of the Library of Virginia presented the library's research on the nominees.

In considering the full nominee list, the Work Group agreed that in narrowing the list, consideration would be given to (a) the nominees' primary contributions in Virginia; (b) how significantly the nominees' efforts contributed to the advancement of Emancipation or Civil Rights; (c) whether nominees have already been memorialized in Virginia; and (d) chronological and regional diversity. The working group then narrowed the list of nominees to 14 pre-Emancipation nominees, 57 post-Emancipation nominees, and three nominees whose contributions spanned both eras.

Designs for the Monument's pedestal currently allow for four pre-Emancipation and four post-Emancipation figures to be honored, featuring each figure's name, years of birth and death (if deceased), bronze relief portrait, and short biography. The Work Group discussed alternatives to the current format that might allow for more nominees to be honored, including abbreviating or removing biographies and providing written materials onsite, and developing an app to serve as an interactive guide for visitors. Chairwoman McClellan planned to discuss potential modifications—subject to approval by the full Commission—with the Monument's artist, Jay Warren, to permit more individuals to be included on the base.

Members agreed to meet again in May 2017 to narrow nominees down to a list of finalists, which would be presented to the public and discussed in public hearings throughout the state. Members noted that every nominee, including non-finalists, would be honored on the Commission's website. Chairwoman McClellan suggested that the public hearings be promoted heavily by reaching out to community organizations, churches, and local groups as well as through press releases in order to receive maximum public input.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.