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**Representative Hart Issues Statement on the Senate
Passing the Taskforce on Abandoned Cemeteries Bill**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – On Thursday April 29, 2021, [HB 37](#) was passed in the Senate after being presented by **Senator Cruz**. This bill would establish a statewide taskforce to study and find abandoned cemeteries around the State. This effort started as a result of the historic African-American Cemeteries that were found in Robles Park Housing in House District 61.

Representative Dianne Hart (D-Tampa) issued the following statement:

“I am happy to see the passage of this bill today. This is an essential step in acknowledging our past and moving towards our future. I want to thank **Senator Cruz** and **Senator Rouson** for their work on this issue and for shedding light on this historic problem throughout the state of Florida.”

Senator Janet Cruz (D-Tampa) issued the following statement:

“The intentional abandoning of these historically African-American cemeteries is a continuation of the dark legacy of slavery and Jim Crow in our country and state. To finally address this issue directly, even incrementally, is an immense step forward. **Representative Driskell** and I count this as a victory, but we will not cease in our efforts until these souls are allowed to rest.”

Senator Darryl Rouson (D-St. Petersburg) issued the following statement:

“There are new cemeteries being found daily. What we’ve learned is that we cannot run away from our collective history, or worse, force our history off the pages of time. There are those who thought building buildings and building roads could obliterate the memory and dignity of those people and those families that were buried there. This bill is a testament that this should never happen again.”

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