



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB0566: Commission on State and Local Government Real Property Bearing
Confederate Names**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 28th, 2024: 1:00 PM

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice-Chair, and members of the committee for the record I am Delegate Brooke Grossman, and I am here to testify on House Bill 566. HB0566 would establish a state-wide commission that would research and identify county and state-owned streets, parks, and other publicly owned entities that bear Confederate names. The commission would consist of 24 members from each jurisdiction who are appointed by the Governor and an executive director who would provide administrative assistance. The commission will submit a report of their findings to the Governor and all 24 local jurisdictions by 2031. The commission itself will only be tasked with identifying public properties that bear Confederate names, it has no authority to rename a public property.

The state of Maryland would not be the first jurisdiction to pursue this naming prohibition. In 2021, the Department of Defense formed the Naming Commission to rename any of their assets associated with Confederate individuals. Aside from their military assets, the commission identified hundreds of other assets such as streets and buildings that were recommended to be renamed. Multiple local entities such as Loudoun County VA, the City of Alexandria, and Montgomery County have all begun the process of renaming their streets that are commemorative of Confederate leaders.

The commission's task would be reflective of Maryland's goal to be inclusive and ensure that our schools, streets, and parks are not commemorative of Confederate individuals. In many cases around the country, the naming of public properties in honor of Confederate individuals became popular decades after the Civil War as a backlash to the Civil Rights movement.

Maryland should ensure that the names of our public properties do not commemorate a cause or individuals who engaged in an insurrection to preserve their ability to maintain enslaved African Americans. The history of our country has a place in textbooks, museums, and national battlefields where context is provided in understanding who these individuals were. All Marylanders should live, work, and play in spaces that are welcoming and reflective of our shared values.

Therefore, I ask for a favorable report on HB5566.