



**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB0566: State and Local Government - Real Property - Confederate Naming Prohibited**

Health and Government Operations  
February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024: 1:00 PM

Madam 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 provide a necessary change to how counties and the state of Maryland names properties, streets, parks, and other publicly owned entities. This bill would specifically prohibit county and state governments from naming public real property after any individual who voluntarily served with the Confederacy of the United States or after the Confederacy itself. Furthermore, any county or state property currently named after a Confederate individual must be renamed by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027.

The state of Maryland would not be the first jurisdiction to pursue this naming prohibition. In 2019, Congressman Gregory Meeks (D-New York) proposed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that prohibited the Department of Defense (DOD) from naming assets after Confederate leaders or battlefield victories. Subsequently, in 2021, Congress in a bipartisan manner, passed the NDAA which stipulated that the DOD form the Naming Commission to rename any of their assets associated with Confederate individuals. Aside from their military assets, the commission named hundreds of other assets such as streets and buildings that were recommended to be renamed. At the end of 2023, the DOD had renamed 9 Army bases and multiple naval vessels. Loudoun County and the City of Alexandria in Virginia have begun the process of renaming their streets that are commemorative of Confederate leaders. Additionally, Montgomery County has identified multiple streets that commemorate national Confederate leaders and subsequently begun a process of renaming them.

These changes 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. The commemoration of Confederate leaders in public spaces is psychologically and emotionally harmful to people of color as Professor Gregg Suzanne Ferguson at WVU noted in her research.

She interviewed over a dozen black educators from schools named after Confederate leaders. One educator stated, “I think a school named after a Confederate could only be used as a negative role model for black students, or any student for that matter, of what NOT to do.” Another educator stated that they would not “want my Teacher of the Year Award to have my name tied with a white supremacist. . . . Just think of all the African American student diplomas under the banner of a Confederate for a lifetime.”

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.

**I urge a favorable report on HB0566.**