



February 9, 2024

The Honorable Members of the Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, MD

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB0566

Dear Members of the Assembly,

I submit written testimony to you today on behalf of the Washington County NAACP Branch 7030B in support of HB0566, which seeks to prohibit the naming of county and state properties, streets, and parks after individuals associated with the Confederacy and mandates the renaming of any such properties currently bearing such names by 2027.

We urge you to consider the importance of this legislation for future generations of Marylanders. We deserve to live in a state that does not celebrate figures who represent a painful legacy of oppression and racial injustice.

The mission of the NAACP is to advocate for justice and equality. We are committed to combating systemic racism, which is why we strongly support HB0566.

The Confederacy represents a dark chapter in our Nation's history. This history includes the brutal enslavement and dehumanization of African Americans. The names of Confederate leaders and sympathizers dredge up the horrors of slavery and remind us of the struggle for civil rights and equality that continues to this day.

For far too long, our communities have been forced to confront the painful reminders of this legacy in the form of streets, parks, and properties named after Confederate figures. These names serve as constant reminders of the generational trauma inflicted upon African Americans by the Confederacy and its ideology of white supremacy.

By discontinuing the celebration of individuals associated with the Confederacy, Maryland will take a crucial step toward acknowledging the deep wounds inflicted upon our Country. This bill will foster healing and understanding. Renaming these properties sends a powerful message that we are committed to building a more inclusive and equitable State.

We ask you to stand on the right side of history and support HB0566. Let Maryland demonstrate to the Country that we are a state that values justice, equality, and reconciliation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Taj Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Taj Smith, President  
Washington County NAACP Branch 7030B  
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