



Testimony - HB 160, State and Local Government - Real Property - Confederate
Naming Prohibited
Favorable
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
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Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee:

SEIU Local 500, which represents thousands of public sector and nonprofit workers
across Maryland, including early childhood educators, school support staff, college
faculty, and other public servants strongly supports House Bill 160.

SEIU Local 500 believes that taxpayer dollars should never be used to honor treason,
rebellion, or the violent defense of human bondage. The Confederacy was an armed
insurrection against the United States, formed explicitly to preserve slavery. Naming
public property after the Confederacy or those who voluntarily served it amounts to
state-sanctioned reverence for a cause fundamentally incompatible with democracy,
equality, and the rule of law.

HB 160 draws a clear and necessary line by prohibiting State and local governments
from assigning Confederate names to publicly owned real property. This bill ensures
that Maryland does not continue—or restart—the practice of using public resources to
legitimize or celebrate a treasonous regime that sought to dismantle the United States
and deny basic rights to millions of people.

For our members, this issue is not symbolic—it is material. SEIU Local 500 members work in schools, libraries, public buildings, and community spaces that are funded by taxpayer dollars and meant to serve everyone. No worker should be required to report to a workplace, or serve the public in a facility that bears the name of individuals who fought to uphold slavery and racial terror. Public property should reflect shared civic values, not glorify rebellion against the Constitution.

HB 160 also makes clear that this prohibition applies prospectively, respecting existing naming decisions while ensuring that future public investments do not repeat the mistakes of the past. This is a reasonable, forward-looking approach that protects historical context without endorsing historical wrongdoing.

At a time when extremist ideologies and historical revisionism are again gaining traction, Maryland has an obligation to be explicit about what—and whom—we honor with public funds. Taxpayer dollars should support public service, education, and community wellbeing, not the commemoration of those who took up arms against the United States.

HB 160 affirms a simple principle: there should be no monuments, buildings, streets, or public spaces named in honor of treason—and no public dollars spent to do so.

SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 160. Thank you to Delegates Schindler, Behler, Fair, Kaufman, Palakovich Carr, and Woorman for championing this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
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SEIU Local 500