



Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Joint Committee on the Library  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
Vice Chairperson  
Joint Committee on the Library  
1401 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt and Vice Chairperson Lofgren:

The Joint Committee on the Library is tasked, by law, with management of the National Statuary Hall collection, including the authority to determine the placement of statues. Currently, 11 statues representing Confederate soldiers and officials are on display as part of the National Statuary Hall collection in the United States Capitol. Among these 11 are Jefferson Davis and Alexander Stephens, President and Vice President of the Confederate States of America, respectively, both of whom were charged with treason against the United States.

The infamous words of Stephens make as clear today as they did in 1861 the aims of the Confederacy. In his "corner-stone speech," Stephens asserted that the "prevailing ideas" relied upon by the Framers included "the assumption of the equality of the races. This was in error." Instead, he laid out in blunt and simple terms the awful truth of the Confederacy: "Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition."

As I have said before, the halls of Congress are the very heart of our democracy. The statues in the Capitol should embody our highest ideals as Americans, expressing who we are and who we aspire to be as a nation. Monuments to men who advocated cruelty and barbarism to achieve such a plainly racist end are a grotesque affront to these ideals. Their statues pay homage to hate, not heritage. They must be removed.

While I believe it is imperative that we never forget our history lest we repeat it, I also believe that there is no room for celebrating the violent bigotry of the men of the Confederacy in the hallowed halls of the United States Capitol or in places of honor across the country.

Let us lead by example. To this end, I request the Joint Committee on the Library direct the Architect of the Capitol to immediately take steps to remove these 11 statues from display in the United States Capitol.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this request.

Sincerely,



NANCY PELOSI  
Speaker of the House

CC: The Honorable J. Brett Blanton, Architect of the Capitol