

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2020

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor
District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser:

On August 31, 2020, the District of Columbia Facilities and Commemorative Expressions (DCFACES) Working Group issued a report recommending that the D.C. government make radical changes to D.C.'s historic monuments and memorials to “reflect contemporary DC values.”¹ We are shocked and appalled that Washington, D.C.—the seat of government for our great nation and named for our first President—would seek to erase the legacy of our nation’s founders and trivialize their contributions to the American experiment. You must immediately suspend this dangerous attempt at revising American history and desecrating the memory of our nation’s presidents, war heroes, and visionaries.

The Working Group’s recommendations are radical. The Working Group wants the Federal government to “remove, relocate, or contextualize” eight different monuments and memorials located on federal property.² This absurd recommendation targets monuments and memorials for President George Washington, President Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and other American heroes. These monuments are in place to represent American values and heritage—not simply to reflect your notion of “contemporary DC values.” Recommending their removal, relocation, or contextualization is nothing short of an attempt to rewrite the history of our country.

The Working Group further recommends renaming nearly two dozen public schools in the District named after prominent Americans.³ Among the historical figures whose names would be erased are Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone and an immigrant who became a naturalized U.S. citizen; five different U.S. Presidents; Francis Scott Key, the author of our national anthem; and Charles William Eliot, the longest-serving president of Harvard University and who Theodore Roosevelt once said was “the only man in the world I envy.”⁴

¹ BEVERLY PERRY & RICHARD REYES-GAVILAN, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FACILITIES AND COMMEMORATIVE EXPRESSIONS WORKING GROUP REPORT (Aug. 30, 2020), https://mayor.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/mayormb/page_content/attachments/DC-FACES-Executive-Summary.pdf [hereinafter DCFACES Report].

² *Id.* at 22

³ *Id.* at 18.

⁴ *Eliot, Charles W.*, HARVARD SQUARE LIBR., <https://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/biographies/charles-w-eliot-harvard-university-president/>.

The Working Group report, commissioned at your behest, is a disappointing waste of taxpayer dollars. The District of Columbia government is a creation of, and subordinate to, the United States Congress,⁵ and the District receives a significant portion of its budget from federal grants and federal payments.⁶ The District is not merely a city in the United States, it is our Nation's capital city—and it is held in trust by the Federal government for the benefit of all Americans now and in the future.

The District should refrain from wasting taxpayer dollars on misadventures in historical revisionism meant to placate radical left-wing activists. This is especially true as the District continues to experience left-wing violence and destruction in its streets, where left-wing agitators threatened peaceful individuals leaving the White House and harassed diners, including children.⁷ The restoration of order to the District's streets should be your paramount concern—not rewriting American history to fit a left-wing political agenda.

To understand the rationale behind the establishment of the Working Group and the drafting of its report, we ask that you produce the following information to the Committee no later than September 14, 2020:

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to the establishment of DCFACES or any preliminary or predecessor concept;
2. All documents and communications between your office and the DCFACES Working Group; and
3. All documents and communications between the DCFACES Working Group or your office and any non-government entity, including but not limited to the following: media enterprises, the Biden campaign, the Democratic National Committee, or any political action committee.

⁵ See, e.g., District of Columbia Self-Government and Government Reorganization Act, Pub. L. No. 93-198, 87 Stat. 774 (1973).

⁶ See, e.g., *Revenue: Where DC Gets Its Money*, DC FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE 38 (Feb. 9, 2017), <https://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Revenue-Primer-2016-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>.

⁷ See Letter from James Comer, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight and Reform, and Jim Jordan, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, to Muriel Bowser, Mayor, District of Columbia (Sept. 2, 2020).


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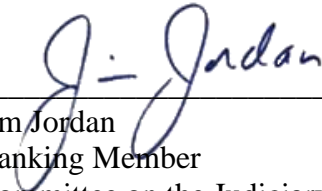
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If you have any questions about this request, please contact Oversight Committee staff at (202) 225-5074 or Judiciary Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight
and Reform



Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman, Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary