



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Holton

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Commending the Removal of the Confederate Flag from the South Carolina Capitol Grounds
FOR the purpose of commending the decision by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley and the state's legislature to remove the Confederate flag from the grounds of the South Carolina State Capitol.

Recitals

Today we join in the nationwide commendation of the decision by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley and the state's legislature to remove the Confederate flag from the grounds of the South Carolina State Capitol. With this decision, a century and a half after the end of the Civil War, the Confederate flag finally no longer flies over any seats of government.

As Governor Haley said in urging the flag's removal:

This has been a very difficult time for our state we have stared evil in the eye and watched good, prayerful people killed in one of the most sacred of places. We were hurt and broken and we needed to heal. We were able to start that process, not by issues ♦ talking about issues that divide us, but by holding vigils. By hugging neighbors, by honoring those we lost, and by falling to our knees in prayer....

....Five years ago it was said in the last 50 years South Carolina is the state that has changed the most for the better. That was true when I quoted it at my first inauguration in 2011; it♦s even more true today. We have changed through the times and we♦ll continue to do so. But that does not mean we forget our history. History is often filled with emotion. And that♦s truer in South Carolina than a lot of other places....

....For many people in our state the [Confederate] flag stands for traditions that are noble.

Traditions of history, of heritage and of ancestry.

The hate▲filled murderer who massacred our brothers and sisters in Charleston has a sick and twisted view of the flag. In no way does he reflect the people of our state who respect, and in many ways, revere it.

Those South Carolinians view the flag as a symbol of respect, integrity and duty. They also see it as a memorial. A way to honor ancestors who came to the service of their state during time of conflict. That is not hate, nor is it racism.

At the same time, for many others in South Carolina, the flag is a deeply offensive symbol of a brutally oppressive past. As a state, we can survive and indeed we can thrive as we have done whilst still being home to both of those viewpoints. We do not need to declare a winner and a loser here....

....One hundred and fifty years after the end of the Civil War, the time has come. There will be some in our state who see this as a sad moment. I respect that. But know this, for good and for bad, whether it is on the statehouse grounds or in a museum the flag will always be a part of the soil in South Carolina. But this is a moment in which we can say that that flag, while an integral part of our past, does not represent the future of our great state.

The murderer now locked up in Charleston said he hoped his actions would start a race war. We have an opportunity to show that not only was he wrong, but that just the opposite is happening.

My hope is that by removing a symbol that divides us we can move forward as a state in harmony and we can honor the nine blessed souls who are now in heaven....

....I understand that what I have said here today will generate a lot of interest. What I ask is that the focus still remain on the nine victims of this horrible tragedy. Their families, the Mother Emanuel family, the AME church family, the South Carolina family. We all deserve time to grieve, and to remember and to heal. We will take it, and I ask that you respect that.

We know that bringing down the confederate flag will not bring back the nine kind souls that were taken from us, nor rid us of the hate and bigotry that drove a monster through the doors of Mother Emanuel that night. Some divisions are bigger than a flag. The evil we saw last Wednesday comes from a place much deeper, much darker.

But we are not going to allow this symbol to divide us any longer. The fact that people are choosing to use it as a sign of hate is something that we cannot stand. The fact that it causes pain to so many is enough to move it from the capitol grounds.

Though made swiftly in response to the atrocities in Charleston, this was a change that was long overdue. We join with Governor Haley in hoping that finally removing any official approval for a flag that is a symbol of hatred and bigotry to many can be a watershed moment in the effort to rid our nation of those scourges and bring all Americans together.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the

Council commends the decision by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley and the state's legislature to remove the Confederate flag from the grounds of the South Carolina State Capitol.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Governor of South Carolina, the leadership of the South Carolina Senate and House, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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