

I live in Northridge, California. I have also written to my elected officials: Representatives Mike Garcia, (CA-27) and Brad Sherman (CA-32); and Senators Alex Padilla and Diane Feinstein.

Thank you for your leadership Congressman Beyer.

Respectfully,

DONNA KUNKEL.

DEAR SENATORS KAINE and WARNER: As a descendant of the enslaved Caroline Branham (and most likely, George Washington Parke Custis as well,) I have been in the process of turning what was hidden family lore into a complicated and fascinating history; one that encompasses the entire communities of Arlington House and Mount Vernon.

It is crucial to me, as an American, that the name of Arlington House reflect the broad history of one of the most popular destinations in the US, and not focus on the legacy of—or be allowed to glorify—Robert E. Lee.

Please support the name change legislation for Arlington House.

My most heartfelt thanks.

DAVID C. LUCAS.

FROM JOCELINE JULIEN: Thank you for this opportunity. Here is my paragraph:

“As a descendant of Caroline Branham, who was enslaved at Arlington and Mount Vernon, I fully support and call for the removal of slave owner and Confederate General Robert E. Lee’s name from Arlington House. To have Lee’s name on this historic property, conjures horrific images of slavery and brutality to those descendants of the enslaved at Arlington House and beyond. To this day, there is a pain of association that must be remedied. It is time to cut the slavery ties.”

My best,

JOCELINE.

FROM TAMARA MOORE: James Parks was born in 1843 on the Arlington estate. After his freedom at 19 years of age, he continued to live, work and finally transitioned into eternity on August 1929. As a part of the descendants group, we endorse the legislation being sponsored to change the name so that it accurately reflects the numerous families that were essential to the Arlington House community. James Parks was honored for his service by the Assistant Secretary of War in 1928 with approval to be buried with full military honors at Arlington Cemetery. As a part of this group, it is amazing that the descendants are able to connect and share the many family stories that began over 150 years ago.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: As an Arlington House and Decatur House slave descendant (Syphax family), I’ve long-since given my complete approval to the effort to change the Arlington House name from its present form to “Arlington House” simply. My approval comes from an appreciation of the idea that doing this would make the name more inclusive. I note that members of the Lee family agree with my fellow slave descendants regarding this. Given the high level of visitorship at Arlington House, the

name change will likely have a broad and thought-provoking effect. The National Park Service has already done a great deal to make inclusiveness at Arlington House real. It’s time to do the same with name.

KENNETH D.M. JENSEN,
Oakton, Virginia.

TO REPRESENTATIVE DON BEYER: I am writing in support of the legislation you introduced to change the name of the ‘Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial’ to the ‘Arlington House National Historic Site.’

As a descendant of the Lee family, I was present at the recent Family Reunion, Finding our Voice, at Arlington House, in April of this year. I was very happy to see you there, supporting the redesignation to better reflect all the residents who lived at both Arlington House and at Arlington Plantation. It was a very moving day because of the warm reception of the descendants of those our family enslaved. The hugs and conversations enriched the weekend for my husband and myself, our daughter Sarah and her then 10 year old Margaret. Margaret and Sarah also read aloud the names of the ancestors of the enslaved and then gave a report at school.

My direct ancestor, Richard Bland Lee, Robert E. Lee’s uncle, was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from Loudoun County from 1796–1797. His enslaved people built and ran Sully Plantation, which is now called Sully Historic Site, in Chantilly, Virginia. I am glad it is no longer called Sully Plantation, and instead called a Historic Site. The same could be true for Arlington House.

Thank you again for your efforts. Please don’t hesitate to call on me if you would like to discuss this further.

MARY LEE FLEMING KOWALSKI.

Quote from NPR story: “I am Gen. Lee’s great-great-grandson, and I am Robert E. Lee the Fifth. I don’t feel like we’re taking the name away,” says Rob Lee. “I think when you call it the Arlington House, you’re just opening it up to more of the families who lived there, honestly. And I think it’s just more appropriate.”

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BEYER: I strongly support legislation to redesignate “Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial” as “the Arlington House National Historic Site.” I am a descendant of the Lee family of Virginia.

Like other Lee/Custis descendants, I view this change not as a repudiation of my ancestors who lived at Arlington House, but as a far more accurate representation of this historic place and its scores of other residents—who literally built the house, cleared the land for agriculture and then maintained it all. They were skilled artisans, farmers, seamstresses, nannies, cooks, and experts at backbreaking labor. The imprint of these enslaved workers is on every inch of the property; without them, it would not exist. Redesignating their home as a National Historic Site will invite and welcome THEIR descendants, who, it must be acknowledged, cannot feel welcome at a place that honors only their great great grandparents’ enslaver. Intaking this action, we are being

true to the most basic morals and values of our country.

CONGRESSMAN BEYER: I am deeply grateful to you for your support, and your commitment to this effort. I am contacting my North Carolina representatives, Senator Thom Tillis, Senator Ted Budd and House Representative David Rouzer, hoping they will join you in supporting this legislation.

With my sincere thanks,

LENI FLEMING.

RECOGNIZING BARBARA TALLEY

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize Barbara Talley, a long-time resident of Southfield in Michigan’s 12th District Strong, for her leadership in the civil rights movement and numerous contributions to the community.

Known locally as the “Mother of Civil Rights.” Ms. Talley blazed the trail for women of color to pursue elected office by being elected as the first African American to serve on Southfield’s City Council. She has worked tirelessly to elevate the voices of people of color and championed issues that would create a more equitable and better quality of life for all.

During her two terms of service on Southfield’s City Council, Ms. Talley initiated an Affirmative Action Plan for hiring more diverse police, fire, management personnel and elevating women in city government. In 1985, she founded the Southfield Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force and held the first annual Peace Walk and Program, which continues to be one of the largest events honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King in the state of Michigan. In 2008, she coordinated a Peace Mission to Liberia, West Africa to meet President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and conducted several workshops aimed at helping to heal trauma of the Liberian Civil War on teen soldiers. She is the author of a book entitled Pathways to Interfaith Dialogue: An Innovative Model for Peace and Community Building. She formerly served as the executive director of Detroit Renaissance District Peace Center at Hope United Methodist Church. As a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Ms. Talley continues to promote their mission of service as a member of the Southfield Alumnae Chapter and as a Delta Dear. She remains active with the Task Force, Hope Church and the sorority. She is also a member of the National Congress of Black Women and Southfield Historical Society.

Mother Talley has been a paragon of public service, a promoter of peace and equity, and a fearless leader in the civil rights movement in Southfield and beyond. Please join me in recognizing her leadership and dedication.