

March 8, 2021

Sent via email to Ask.THG@tn.gov

Tennessee Historical Commission
State Historic Preservation Office
2941 Lebanon Pike
Nashville, TN 37214

Dear Tennessee Historical Commission Board Members,

On behalf of millions of Tennesseans who believe public space should reflect the values of respect, dignity, and equal protection, the ACLU of Tennessee strongly urges the Tennessee Historical Commission to remove the Nathan Bedford Forrest bust from our state capitol.

As a brutal architect of structural racism, Nathan Bedford Forrest represents the forces that undermine the basic framework of civil liberties and civil rights in the United States. Honoring him with a bust in our statehouse is antithetical to the values of decency, respect and equality that most Tennesseans share.

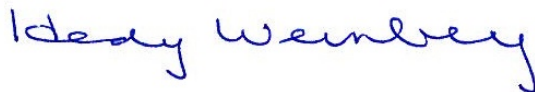
What we choose to represent and honor in public spaces matters. When visitors to our state capitol are greeted by a monument to slavery and white supremacy, it sends a clear message that our government endorses the oppression and inequality that the bust represents. It is past time for the Nathan Bedford Forrest bust to be removed.

Taking down Confederate monuments is not about erasing our history. It is about addressing a serious moral failing in our country by educating the public about our nation's dark history of white supremacy and slavery. Telling the truth about our history is the only way to move forward.

Removing the bust of Nathan Bedford Forrest from the capitol would move us a step closer toward ensuring that the history we choose to celebrate and honor in our public spaces reflects respect and dignity for all Tennesseans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Hedy Weinberg
Executive Director



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cc: Lynda Wynn, Board Contact
Patrick McIntyre, Executive Director of the Tennessee Historical
Commission