



# California Legislature

July 9, 2020

Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins  
Ken Cooley, Chair, Assembly Rules Committee  
Members of the Assembly and Senate Committees on Rules  
Members of the Joint Committee on Rules  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Pro Tempore Atkins and Chair Cooley:

Recent weeks have exposed frustration with the celebration of historical figures that governments have honored with official monuments. Much of that frustration has focused on glaring omissions in the historical narratives of these figures. Only select deeds have been spotlighted, contributing to inaccurate assessments of these individuals' legacies.

A more complete and honest appraisal would lead to greater understanding and more accurate context of our history. Conducting a more thoughtful, transparent review of our "heroes" is not about "denying history," but rather about acknowledging the injustices and suffering they initiated and perpetuated. Such acknowledgement is critical to a full comprehension of those individuals designated as heroes and honored in monuments. Honesty and transparency will create increased awareness and understanding among everyone in our communities and take us toward a healing of the divisions so recently demonstrated.

It is in this spirit that we request a pause in determining the future of the vandalized statue of Franciscan Friar Junipero Serra. California's Native Americans suffered forced assimilation and servitude that included erosion of language, culture, and religion, as well as acts of violence and abuse under the mission system as founded by Serra. We understand the Joint Rules Committee is working with Legislative Counsel to draft an opinion on how to proceed with placement of the Serra statue on Capitol grounds. It is our further understanding that the Legislature designated purchase of the statue and authorized that it be maintained by the Department of Finance in 1965 with passage of AB 1124 (Marks, et al.). This language is included in Section 13082 of the Government Code.

We do not condone vandalism and destruction of property, but we also realize this moment offers a unique opportunity to engender a much deeper and complete knowledge of our state and nation's history.

Therefore, we request that the Legislature convene an advisory committee of legislators, historians, California Native Americans, and other appropriate persons to assist the Joint Rules

Committee in determining the future of the Serra statue. Also, it would be necessary to learn what, if any, amendments might be necessary to Government Code Section 13082 should the Legislature determine that another location for the monument is more fitting than the Capitol grounds. Furthermore, we ask that this “pause” be used to determine whether replacement of Serra’s statue with another monument better representing the state’s mission period and its impact on Native Americans is more appropriate at this juncture in California’s history.

We are requesting a meeting with the Joint Rules Committee Chair and Vice Chair and look forward to discussing how we can move forward on this issue together.

Sincerely,



James C. Ramos  
Assemblymember, 40<sup>th</sup> District



Scott Wiener  
Senator, 11<sup>th</sup> District

cc: Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Governor Gavin Newsom  
Debra Gravert  
Tribal Advisor Christina Snider  
Senator Bill Monning  
Assemblymember Ian C. Calderon  
Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo  
Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham  
Assemblymember Heath Flora  
Assemblymember Timothy S. Grayson  
Assemblymember Sydney Kamlager  
Assemblymember Brian Mainschein  
Assemblymember Devon J. Mathis  
Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva  
Assemblymember Robert Rivas  
Assemblymember Marie Waldron  
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks  
Senator Patricia C. Bates  
Senator Robert M. Hertzberg  
Senator Jerry Hill  
Senator Connie M. Leyva  
Senator Mike McGuire  
Senator Holly J. Mitchell  
Senator John M. W. Moorlach  
Senator Jim Nielsen  
Senator Richard D. Roth  
Senator Nancy Skinner  
Senator Scott Wilk  
Senator Thomas J. Umberg