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RENAMING AND REMOVAL OF HARMFUL NAMES AND MONUMENTS ON STATE TRANSPORTATION RIGHT OF WAY

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PROBLEM AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

Many place names, facilities, and monuments in the United States and other countries contain slurs in their formal or informal titles or celebrate people or organizations that have a racist or derogatory past. In some cases, the harmful nature of the slurs or the discriminatory views or actions of these individuals or groups were unknown at their inception or viewed as unimportant. In other cases, the naming was intended to assert dominance over people of color, women, or ethnic or religious groups. Today, there is broad recognition that the individuals, groups, and notions that are celebrated in public space are not just incidental but purposeful reflections of societal values.

The objectives of this study are to formulate policies and practices that can be used to identify place names that have derogatory or racist linkages and provide recommendations on how to rename or remove harmful names and monuments in the California transportation right of way (ROW). This study was requested by the California Department of Transportation and conducted through the University of California, Berkeley Institute of Transportation Studies Technology Transfer Program.

RESEARCH APPROACH

To carry out the study, the authors conducted a literature review to identify published articles, news reports, investigatory reports, and databases on harmful names and monuments, with a focus on how public agencies have been handling this issue. The authors examined reports on experiences across the United States as well as internationally. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa have undertaken efforts to revise policies on naming public places and monuments. We then designed and implemented a national survey of state departments of transportation (DOTs) to collect information on current practices, challenges, and accomplishments. Additional surveys and interviews were carried out with educational institutions and parks departments that had had recent experience with naming or renaming and with representatives of nonprofits and community groups that have been active in naming actions. (Appendix A presents the survey and interview guides.) We paid particular attention to issues and practices in California, consulting with state agency officials and stakeholder groups to discuss the issues raised in naming and renaming facilities and monuments in the state and to solicit their views and recommendations.

For the survey of DOTs, we identified at least two officials at each state agency using a combination of online and telephone contacts—individuals listed in reports or on websites as engaged in or responsible for naming, or if no such person was identified, a communications director, a planning director, or an equity office head. We made two attempts per person to make contact. We received responses from 30 DOTs. Five states declined to participate in our survey, and we received no response from the remaining 15 state DOTs.

We contacted 16 local governments (cities, counties, and tribes) and 21 other entities (including nonprofits, schools, and private organizations) that had been reported in the literature or in the media as having experience with naming or renaming issues or monument removals. Of the 16 local governments we contacted, we received responses from 7. Of the 21 other organizations we contacted, we received nine responses. In each case, we either interviewed the respondents or exchanged emails in response to the questions we posed. All those who responded had experience with issues concerning facility or place names or with monuments or memorials of controversial persons, although their experiences varied. Some were involved in organizing efforts to change names or remove monuments. Some had developed lists of slurs, names of Confederate soldiers, or others known to have espoused

racial, ethnic, gender, or religious discrimination. Others were engaged in organizing investigations into the background of the persons being memorialized and documenting their findings, and some had focused on legislative or administrative policies to set or revise standards for naming or for monument placement or removal. Because many of the people who we talked to asked not to be identified or would require their organization's permission to provide a statement on their organization's policies, we have not reported specific names or organizations, unless the information was already publicly available.

LITERATURE REVIEW: KEY ISSUES

Scholars have written about the values reflected in public names and monuments, as well as the conflicts that arise over their presence in public spaces. Additionally, in the past several years, magazines, news reports, and electronic media have covered controversies over racist or otherwise discriminatory names and monuments in public spaces. These articles illustrate the public policy issues that names and monuments raise.

Scholars argue that place names and monuments are important because they do not just relay neutral historical facts but also demonstrate a location's values and communicate its identities, core beliefs, and historical preferences. Naming buildings and erecting statutes indicates whose past we want to bring into the present and shows whose values we, as a society, choose to adopt as collective values (MARL, 2020). The names and monuments are symbols of honor.

In a number of locations across the United States, terms that are slurs against a particular racial, ethnic, or gender group continue to be used in the names of geographic features (creeks, rivers, mountains), public facilities (schools, parks, streets and highways) and, in some cases, cities and towns. Scholars and activists have assembled lists of such slurs and their locations (see Appendix C). In addition, in some cases government officials have established policies to remove these slurs from public names, although action has not always been taken on the policies.

Other names and monuments memorialize individuals for their local, state, national, or even international roles. Honoring a person through naming a public facility or place or erecting a statue is a way of reminding viewers of the person's actions, perspectives, and the examples they set. As such, named facilities and memorials are not neutral representations of history but signals of community values, cultural authority, and power relations (Morris, 2018). Thus, in choosing those to be honored, naming and memorials can assert the values of some in society over the values of others. The choices of whom to honor can reflect power imbalances, gender biases, or ethnic, racial, and religious prejudices, impose conqueror authority or settler colonialism, or signify white supremacy while erasing or demeaning Indigenous histories and knowledge (McGill et al., 2022).

Wilkie (2015) notes that monuments often represent the myth of a person rather than reality. Names and monuments also tend to represent selective aspects of the honored person's life. A broader assessment or one that is more inclusive of the entire community in the evaluation process might reach a different conclusion as to the appropriateness of the memorial.

Changing names or removing monuments is often controversial precisely because the debates reflect changing values in society and the complex relationships among history, place, and identity. A major argument made by those who resist name changes or monument removal is that the name or monument is equivalent to erasing history, tradition, and (for some), cultural identity, whereas those who advocate change argue that challenged

names and monuments honor memories and promote values that are offensive and harmful. Emotions can run strong.

Some question the value of changing names or removing monuments, seeing the actions as ineffective distractions from more pressing issues or as a form of “virtue signaling” that accomplishes virtually nothing with regard to the underlying problems the names or monuments represent.” Supporters counter that changing names or removing monuments makes a statement that the actions and views that are racist, misogynistic, or otherwise hateful are wrong and will not be disregarded in deciding who deserves public honor.

Pragmatic issues can also come into the debate. For example, opponents often argue that changes in names would necessitate costly revisions of mapping and signage, lead to problems in wayfinding and public safety response times, create difficulties with public records, such as deeds and licenses tied to addresses, undercut advertising and branding, and harm tourism. Proponents counter that numerous streets and even cities and countries have changed names over the years and the changes became the norm—examples include the many U.S. streets renamed after Martin Luther King and the numerous public facilities renamed for John F. Kennedy; the cities of Mumbai (Bombay), Istanbul (Constantinople), Toronto (York), Ottawa (Bytown), and New York (New Amsterdam); and countries such as Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Burkina Faso (Upper Volta).

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Global efforts to remove harmful place names and monuments are not new. Over the past century, many places have been renamed as parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America shook off colonialism and as European dictators fell and territories reorganized. However, efforts to remove names and monuments associated with racial, ethnic, and gender biases have increased recently. Here we review experiences reported in the literature for Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, countries that, like the United States, have a history of colonial settlement linked to racial oppression. And like the United States, these four countries have been reviewing and, in many cases, removing place names and monuments that memorialize actors whose behavior was harmful as a way to reconcile past injustices and mistakes.

AUSTRALIA

Numerous towns, cities, and geographical features in Australia reflect Scottish influence, named after Scotland towns and historical figures, and most registered public monuments in Australia are dedicated to Scottish settlers, who are depicted as heroes. These monuments tend to “maintain Scottish memory, culture, and identity in Australia” (Wilkie, 2015). Likewise, monuments to English explorers and settlers are found throughout the country. Gapps (2021) highlights the multitude of Australian sculptures of these British Isles notables that depict an “explorer with native guide at his feet,” many of which are accompanied by plaques that focus on white settlers’ accomplishments and leave out the details that are less admirable, such as colonist displacement or even massacre of indigenous people.

A case in point is the Captain Cook monument in Sydney. The monument became a matter of public debate due to a plaque’s inscription that contains myth, which is that he discovered the Australian territory, when in fact, indigenous peoples inhabited the land for more than 60,000 years before European settlement (Grant, 2017). Cook, an English native who also explored Newfoundland, New Zealand, the west coast of North America, and Hawaii, has been recognized for his contributions to cartography, botany, and even dietary science—his sailors did

not get scurvy because he fed them fruit. At the same time, his role as an enabler of colonialism and violence against native peoples is controversial. (He was killed by Native Hawaiians while attempting to kidnap the Hawaiian king.)

Gapps (2021) notes that what to do about such monuments is far from settled. Some argue that the monuments themselves are part of history, with a story about who placed them and why, as well as the story of the individuals being commemorated. Supporters of this position often argue that placing a plaque providing a more balanced story could be a remedy (e.g., Wars, 2021). Gapps disagrees, arguing that the monument itself has a significantly stronger presence than written words on a plaque. He suggests that an alternative solution could be more performative in nature, e.g., demonstrations and protests, but that in some cases "... the only way to cut the constant reaffirmation of a landscape of racism, dispossession and absence is radical removal rather than a reconciling modification."

CANADA

Canada's long history of colonization has resulted in diverse populations and cultures residing in the country. The country, whose early European explorers and settlers were from France and the United Kingdom, is officially bilingual (English and French). Since the 1970s, Canada has had policies officially promoting broader multiculturalism, partly stimulated by other ethnic groups protesting their exclusion from bicultural approaches. Multicultural policies were formalized in Canadian law beginning in 1988.

Nevertheless, the policies and laws have been criticized as being "ineffective in addressing broader questions of structural racism, social oppression, domination, and marginalization of peoples in society. For example, some authors (e.g., Dei, 2011) have argued that there is a need to "broaden the discussion around identity, citizenship, and belonging to include not only 'immigrants' but other racialized, colonized, oppressed, and indigenous bodies in white settler contexts."

Against this backdrop, statues to Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, have become a point of controversy. While Macdonald has long been recognized for his early leadership, his discriminatory policies toward indigenous populations destroyed many lives. He has been accused of allowing famine and disease to kill many indigenous people; his government forced some First Nation communities to leave their traditional territories, withholding food until they did so. He also created a system of state-funded boarding schools to which at least 150,000 indigenous children were forcibly relocated. The children were forbidden from speaking their own language or practicing their culture, some were abused, and thousands died while in custody. A 2015 report from the Canadian Government called this practice "cultural genocide."

Recently, several Macdonald statues and monuments have been vandalized with words such as "this is stolen land," "murderer," and "colonizers." These actions have led to removing Macdonald statues across many private and public spaces in Kingston, Canada, Macdonald's hometown, as well as in other Canadian cities. However, removing the memorials has been controversial. Murray & Carl (2017) suggest that as an alternative, plaques acknowledging indigenous people's history and presence could be placed around the city. They also argue for acknowledging the increasing presence of other racial minorities, not just indigenous populations who are most often brought up in conversations about the history of the people of Canada.

Canada has also experienced the change of place names, for which it has established a formal process. The name change must be initiated by a community member (not the government), followed by a plebiscite where community members vote for a name, after which, the mayor and council must write a letter to the Minister of Government and Community services to formally request the change (McKay, 2019). An example is Kinngait, Nunavut, which was formerly known as Cape Dorset (Baffin Island). Challenges slowing down the name change in this case were difficulty in pronunciation of the indigenous name and concern about the name change's impact on international marketing of the residents' widely acclaimed art. Uluocha (2015) calls the process of renaming place names with indigenous names "toponym decolonization" and states that it is a strategy for reclaiming indigenous lands.

NEW ZEALAND

There has been growing use of Māori (indigenous people of New Zealand) place names in New Zealand. According to Berg & Kearns (1996), New Zealand's English place names evoke wealthy, white family imagery while Māori place names evoke poor minorities and working-class families, and as such, the place names "reinforce claims of national ownership, state power, and masculine control." The Māori people, through name change proposals, are taking steps to reclaim their land while also reconstructing the social and gender landscape of towns in New Zealand.

The W(h)anganui district spelling controversy illustrates the issues that can arise over place names and shows how history is marshalled to argue for and against changes (Morris, 2018). The name of the town is derived from the Māori name of the river at whose mouth the town sits. The English spelling, dating from the 1800s, was Wanangui. In 1991, following an application from local Māori tribes, the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) recommended that the river name be spelled Whanganui with an "h," consistent with Māori spelling conventions. Nearly two decades later, in 2009, the Māori requested that the town name also be changed to include an "h." Debate ensued and, in a local referendum, voters rejected the proposed change. However, stating that policy required that the Māori spelling be followed, the NZGB recommended the name change to the Ministry for Land Information, who had the final authority in approving name changes. The Ministry decided to allow spellings of both place names while agreeing to push toward Whanganui in the future. Finally, in 2015, the Ministry officially confirmed the name change to Whanganui. While disagreement continued over the spelling of the name, a community vote in 2016 resulted in a majority supporting the proposal to rename the town with an "h." However, the majority of the population who voted for Whanganui was Māori while most pakehas (white New Zealanders) opposed.

Morris's (2018) analysis shows how the different parties use their interpretations of the past as a source of evidence and justification for their positions. For example, those who opposed the insertion of the "h" argued that a long history of the spelling Wanganui (and pragmatically, its use in official documents) justified its continuance. Those who wanted the spelling changed argued that the misspelling was disrespectful of the Māori people. Morris shows that over time, strong emotional attachments were formed on each side, associated with people's sense of heritage and belonging as well as with underlying grievances and antagonisms.

New Zealand's naming debates extend to the name of the country itself. The term New Zealand became popularized by Europeans after James Cook's exploration journals were published. In June 2022, the Māori submitted over 70,000 signatures to the Parliament requesting changing the name to Aotearoa (2022). This is a contested topic for both pragmatic and cultural reasons. Many believe changing the name could cause

international branding issues, as well as pronunciation problems for those who are not familiar with the Māori language. Many also appear to be irritated by the proposal, seeing it as a distraction from more pressing issues, such as income disparities.

SOUTH AFRICA

Mushati (2013) argues that throughout Africa, language and cultural imperialism were employed to remind indigenous people that they had become subjects of European powers. The imposition of European names was a way of confirming the conquest of the indigenous people and signaling the emergence of a new authority that was imposing a new identity on the conquered country. Renaming did not stop with place names, as many Africans were given European names and forced to speak a European language in order to enjoy some of the “benefits” afforded by the colonialists, such as going to school or getting jobs. The renaming and naming of infrastructure and places was a tool of consolidation of “white hegemony in the country.”

In South Africa, where British and Dutch settlers vied for control, the National Place Name Committee (NPNC) that was formed in 1939 to conduct consultations on name changes initially concentrated on establishing Afrikaans and English names. It changed its focus to Afrikaans names after 1948 to reflect the Afrikaans’ dominant political power (Jenkins, 1990).

With the fall of apartheid in the 1990s, NPNC made proactive efforts to erase racial slurs from place names and to rename airports named after controversial individuals. In the ensuing years, political and ethnic organizations have pushed for additional name changes for streets and other public facilities, towns, as well as for the country itself—from South Africa, a colonial name, to Azania, a symbolic name representative of liberation. The name change process proved to be contentious and slow and, in response, the South African Names Council (SAGNC) was formed in 1998 and helped establish a more inclusive yet streamlined process for name changes.

Nevertheless, the impacts of colonialism remain visible in many forms in South Africa today, including names of numerous public facilities and places. Guyot & Seethal (2007) write that such colonial-era place names are “spatial symbols of colonialism, racial appropriation, segregation, and apartheid,” and Coombes (2004) argues that renaming them helps to rectify the harms and set aside the memory of such a past. In this context, it is not surprising that proposals for name changes have recently expanded, along with new demarcation of municipalities to remove political territories that had embodied segregation. However, Guyot & Seethal (2007) point out that renaming can also trigger opposition if changing names is seen as erasing the memory of the past for the descendants of the colonialists. South African court cases filed against renaming (usually on procedural grounds) suggest that for whites, emotional attachments to colonial names remain intact.

To assure fair and transparent decision-making on name changes, South Africa has established a detailed set of procedures. Proposals for a change are required to come directly from the community members, and multiple names can be considered. Public information on the proposals is broadcast widely, and meetings to consider the names are held, along with votes on the names. SAGNC is in charge of larger-scale naming, such as for cities, towns, and provinces, while local names, like libraries, streets, and cemeteries, are the responsibility of local authorities. Final decision-making power lies in the hands of the Ministry.

Using these processes, the Gauteng province effectively consulted the residents and incorporated different African languages with similar pronunciation to propose a name change that everyone agreed on. Yet effective

participation has not always been easy to achieve. In the case of the municipality of Makhado (formerly Louis Trichardt), an initial attempt at the name change was rejected due to white residents' protests that there had been inadequate public engagement. Subsequently, local officials tried again with an extensive outreach program. Despite multimedia calls for participation and numerous public workshops, only a few town residents took the opportunity to propose a name (which could include retention of the colonial name), and a very small percentage of whites attended meetings or voted on the naming options, leading to speculation that they did not have confidence in the process and felt that their identity was being erased (Musitha, 2016).

U.S. EXPERIENCES

The United States has thousands of monuments, signs, place names, and facilities bearing names that have been identified as derogatory and offensive. Some use terms that are widely recognized as slurs, while others commemorate people who were racist, misogynistic, or sexist, and still others celebrate events that are painful and dehumanizing for many. Organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center have created lists of hateful groups and Confederate monuments with the intent to assist activists working for change. Many other organizations, from national groups like the ACLU to local organizations such as Project Say Something in Florence, Alabama, provide training, community building, and other assistance for those who want to protest and change such symbols. There are also organizations that fight against name changes, considering the names to honor their forebears or people who made contributions, even if some of their views or actions are not praiseworthy.

Interviews we conducted with activists and their supporters revealed that the lack of a clear process for dealing with controversies over naming and monuments is a serious problem. The interviewees reported being asked to do research to document the history of the name or monument and reasons for wanting change, and then to organize meetings and prove there was support for their position, only to be told that their meetings were not sufficiently representative or their surveys and petitions were not properly validated. Interviewees also reported having their documentation, petitions, and requests ignored or dismissed without any reasons being provided. Resources were a major issue, with several respondents commenting that they lack the money, time, and expertise needed to organize and carry out the research, petitions, surveys, and public meetings needed to measure and document support for their requests, but the burden for seeking change is often placed on them. Opponents of several proposed changes reported similar issues: they felt that their voices were not heard and that the reasons for change were flimsy or based on inaccurate information, but they lacked the resources to effectively defend their positions. One complained about monuments being removed without any public consultation.

For these reasons, interview respondents on both sides of the issue advocated that legislatures and government agencies establish clear and formal procedures for consideration of names and monuments in public places. As one put it, emotions can run high, and having a clear process can help in dealing with the difficult conversations about history, identity, racism, misogyny, and harms done in the past. Clear rules on how to have these conversations and reach and report decisions were widely seen as desirable.

Here we highlight a number of U.S. experiences and report on a survey of state DOTs documenting their experiences and practices.

MONUMENTS

Monuments are mostly statues on pedestals but can also include plaques, markers, fountains, arches, gates, frescos, and murals. In the United States, anyone is free to install or remove a monument on private property. On public property, governments can choose to display or not display monuments, but the decision can be subject to laws ranging from safety considerations (e.g., maintaining a clear zone along a public highway) to a range of ethical and political considerations.

A Utah controversy over a proposed monument in a city park was reviewed in the U.S. Supreme Court in *Pleasant Grove v. Summum* (2009). The Court ruled that the city could refuse to place a permanent monument in a public park, because permanent monuments are a form of government speech immune from First Amendment review. Writing for the majority, Justice Samuel Alito said, “Permanent monuments displayed on public property typically represent government speech.”

In Knoxville, Tennessee, a large statue of the Confederate General and Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard Nathaniel Bedford Forrest, erected in 1998, sits on private property in full view of passing motorists on I-65. In 2015, the Knoxville Metro Council approved a resolution asking the Tennessee DOT to plant vegetation to block the view of the statue, but TDOT denied the request, stating: “TDOT does not plant foliage on its right-of-way with the sole intention of blocking items on private property based on what might be offensive to some and not to others” (Garrison, 2015).

The mayors of New Orleans and Baltimore removed all Confederate monuments in their cities (Aguilera, 2020). In Baltimore, the monuments were quietly removed overnight. The mayor cited public safety as one of the reasons for the removals, noting that in a number of cases where officials had not acted, someone had damaged or destroyed the monuments and that in some instances violence had erupted (Marbella, 2018). In New Orleans, the mayor began a push for Confederate monument removal in 2015, arguing that the monuments presented a “false narrative of history” and that it was time to stop glorifying a Confederate past (Bondarenko, 2017). The City Council then declared the monuments a public nuisance. Litigation and protests followed, but in 2017, the last of the monuments came down (Wendland, 2017).

In Texas, the Sons of the Confederate Veterans requested that the Department of Motor Vehicles issue a license plate depicting the Confederate flag. The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Board rejected the plate, reasoning that too many people find the Confederate flag offensive. The Sons of Confederate Veterans sued, claiming that the denial was an unlawful suppression of their First Amendment speech rights. In the case *Walker v. Texas Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans* (2015), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the state of Texas could deny a specialty license plate without violating the First Amendment, reasoning that license plates are a form of government speech.

Several Southern states restrict removal of monuments. For example, North Carolina, which has hundreds of Confederate monuments, passed a law in 2015 that requires government permission to remove a government-owned “monument of remembrance.” Lovelady (2017) points out that this legislation raises several questions about street names and signs. Local governments have statutory authority in North Carolina for naming and renaming streets under their jurisdiction, and a standard street sign is merely a traffic control message, not an object of remembrance. For commemorative street names, he argues that it is the name of the street that is the commemoration, not the sign. However, in cases where there are actual monuments or markers separate from the

signs, their removal might trigger the restriction because the marker is likely to be deemed an object of remembrance.

NAMING

As in other countries, the U.S. has had experience with naming and renaming over many years. Here we review some of the most salient laws, policies, and experiences affecting naming.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

Created through Public Law 242-80th Congress in 1890 and established by federal law in its present form in 1947, the Board on Geographic Names (BGN) is a federal agency that maintains uniform geographic name usage in federal records and on federal maps. This body of federal agency representatives has final approval to accept or deny name changes on U.S. federal maps (U.S. Department of Interior, 2021).

Graham (2022) notes that by design, the BGN focuses on the establishment of standardized, uniform nomenclature and gives significant weight to names in local use and preference. A clear process is laid out for proposed renaming (US Geological Survey, 2018):

- (1) conduct research on current name and proposed name change
- (2) solicit input from local, city, and town governments; county commissioners; State Geographic Names Boards and Authorities; any Native American Tribe that has current or historical interest in the area; and any Federal, State, or local land management agency
- (3) evaluate and discuss information
- (4) motion is whether to approve, not approve, or defer the proposal for further information
- (5) majority vote of members to pass motion.

The policies of the agency make it clear that name changes are not likely to be approved without compelling reasons for the changes.

Changes have been known to take considerable time, often many years. The agency acknowledges this and explains that the lengthy review period is due to the need to research the issues and consult with state and local governments who might not respond quickly to inquiries. Furthermore, the agency reports that since 2014 it has not been able to maintain many elements of its former coverage and will archive information on a number of feature classes: Airport, Bridge, Building, Cemetery, Church, Dam, Forest, Harbor, Hospital, Mine, Oilfield, Park, Post Office, Reserve, School, Tower, Trail, Tunnel, and Well. Some of these data items might be available going forward from other databases, including the Census and the National Map or through state naming agencies, such

as the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names, which provides recommendations to the BGN on federal names within California. BGN naming activities are regularly posted on its website (USGS, 2022).

Despite these limitations, the federal government has a history of removing pejorative names. In 1962, Secretary of Interior Stuart Udall mandated a blanket change to the BGN list of places bearing the N-word, substituting the term “Negro,” which at the time was considered appropriate. In addition, in 1974, the Department implemented a similar policy changing the word “Jap” to “Japanese.” Since the 1990s, the term “Negro” also has been evaluated on a case-by-case basis as some African American communities believe the word to be acceptable and others do not (USGS, 2018).

In November 2021, Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland added the word “squaw” to the list of derogatory names that cannot be used and created a task force to identify alternative names. In addition, to streamline the federal process for changing offensive names, the Secretary established the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names. The committee’s charge is to advise the BGN on the renaming of offensive place names on federal lands (U.S. Department of Interior, 2021). The effect of these actions will be to accelerate decisions on name changes.

A bill first introduced by Haaland when she was a member of Congress and now sponsored by Rep. Al Green and Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, H.R.4454 – Reconciliation in Place Names Act, would make the advisory committee a matter of law, with the aim of renaming facilities and natural features on federal lands that have racist and bigoted names as well as those bearing names of individuals who “have upheld slavery, committed unspeakable acts against Native Americans, or led Confederate war efforts.” The proposed legislation would direct the BGN to rename a geographic feature with an offensive name, unless the board determines that (1) there is a compelling reason and substantial public interest in rejecting the recommendation, or (2) approving the recommendation would violate federal law. It also specifies that a board decision would be required within three years of receiving a renaming recommendation.

The new secretarial orders or the proposed law, if passed, might produce a different result from the one in Texas, where despite a 1991 state law that required removal of the word “Negro” from geographic features, more than two dozen places still have the word in the name on federal maps and signs. The BGN rejected Texas’s proposed name changes, explaining that its rejection was due to a lack of consultation with and support from local officials, and also because the proposed names were lacking historical connection to the places (Oxner, 2020).

Naming changes also are proposed from time to time by members of Congress under legislation that would bypass the BGN process. For example, in January 2022, Maryland U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin and House members Eleanor Holmes Norton and Jamie Raskin introduced legislation to remove a former lawmaker’s name from a Chevy Chase traffic circle operated by the National Parks Service. The former lawmaker whose name is in question was a white supremacist who worked to actively ensure that his housing developments were inaccessible to Black, Jewish, and working class families. In proposing the legislation, Congress member Norton stated, “Statues dedicated to Confederates and segregationists belong in museums, not on our streets where they can be misconstrued to mean current support of their racist ideologies” (Van Hollen, 2022).

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMISSION ON NAMING

The Commission on the Naming of Items of the Department of Defense that Commemorate the Confederate States of America or Any Person Who Served Voluntarily with the Confederate States of America was established under

Department of Defense authorization legislation in January 2021. Under the law, by 2024, the Secretary of Defense is required to implement a plan developed by the Commission to “remove all names, symbols, displays, monuments, and paraphernalia that honor or commemorate the Confederate States of America or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederate States of America from all assets of the Department of Defense.”

The Commission’s members are four representatives appointed by the Secretary of Defense and one appointee each by the chairs and ranking members of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and House Committee on Armed Services. To date, the commission has identified military bases, buildings, laboratories, roads, and ships that honor or commemorate Confederates, has solicited public input on new names for the bases, and has narrowed the list to 90 names.

Changing the names of military bases and facilities has been contentious. Pushes for name changes came after the white supremacist terrorist murders in a Black church in 2015, again after the white supremacist rally and killing of a peaceful protestor in 2017, and again after the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police. However, the Pentagon resisted name changes. In 2015, the Pentagon declared it would not rename any military installations named after Confederate generals, saying “the naming occurred in the spirit of reconciliation, not division.” In 2017, the Pentagon declined to comment about the renewed proposals for name changes. In 2020, former President Donald Trump vetoed military budget legislation that included the renaming of federal military installations, among other reasons citing his opposition to the renaming. However, Congress overrode the veto.

The military bases to be renamed are all located in the South. Some of the bases are named after Confederates whose names also appear elsewhere in the country, including Robert E. Lee and Braxton Bragg.

STATE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

State legislatures largely hold the power to name or rename state-owned public facilities and install or remove monuments and other installations on state properties, although in some cases they have delegated this responsibility to state agencies or a state-level administrative committee, or to local governments. Many states have had to deal with controversies over the presence of racist, sexist, or otherwise demeaning names and monuments within their borders. For example, Southern states have contended with state flags containing Confederate iconography, and most of these states have removed the most blatant symbols. The presence of names and monuments honoring Confederate leaders has been a more widespread issue, because such names and monuments have appeared not only in Southern states but also in states not part of the Confederacy, in such diverse locations as state capitols, courthouses, schools and universities, public parks, and cemeteries. As of 2019, 409 Confederate memorials (out of 2,089 memorials) had been removed, renamed, or relocated across the country, many through the actions of governors or state legislatures (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2019).

The Charleston church massacre in 2015, in which nine Black people were murdered by a white supremacist, the 2017 Charlottesville white nationalist rally and counterprotest at which a counter-protester was run over and killed by an angry driver, and the 2020 death of George Floyd by police brutality in Minneapolis led to redoubled attention to the country’s racist legacy and the harm it has continued to impose. While names and monuments are just one step in the movement for change, many stakeholders argue that that the continued use of dehumanizing place names “keeps alive not just the derogatory language but also the racist attitudes and actions [of leaders and residents]” (Seidman, 2021).

Today, people across the country are seeking to dismantle racist monuments and place names that are reminders and seeming symbols of support of white supremacy, settler colonial violence, and genocide against Indigenous peoples and Black and brown communities (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2019). In many instances, state legislatures and agencies have been the venue for change.

State actions of note include the following:

Montana—House Bill 412 requires state land-holding and land-managing agencies to identify all geographic features and places under their jurisdiction using the word “squaw,” calls for the Montana Dept. of Indian Affairs to establish an advisory group to develop replacement names and notify appropriate agencies, requires land-holding and land-managing agencies to remove the word “squaw” from maps, signs, or markers whenever agencies update maps or replace signs and markers because of wear or vandalism, and directs the advisory group to place a formal request with the U.S. BGN to render a decision on the proposed name change so that the new name will be reflected on all U.S. BGN maps (Montana State Legislature, 1999).

Minnesota, Oregon, and Maine—In recent years, these states have also prohibited the use of the word “squaw” in place names.

Utah—SB 10 – Place Names Amendments authorizes the Division of Indian Affairs to help facilitate the application process for changing location names referring to Native Americans and authorizes the Division to identify and bring naming issues to the attention of local tribes (Utah State Legislature, 2021).

Colorado—Governor Jared Polis directed the Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board (CGNAB) to evaluate Colorado landmarks with offensive names and send proposed renamings to the governor for approval. The focus is on natural monuments and landmarks with overtly racist and culturally offensive names and landmarks named after pioneers and politicians with connections to violence against Indigenous tribes. As part of the effort, Squaw Mountain, located in Clear Creek County, was renamed Mestaa’èhehe (Mess-ta-HAY) Mountain. The Board is also reviewing other overtly racist landmark names, like “Negro Creek,” “Redskin Mountain,” and “Chinaman Gulch.”

North Carolina—In January 2021, the North Carolina DOT stopped authorizing the use of specialized license plates of the North Carolina Sons of Confederate Veterans that depict a Confederate battle flag (Asmelash & Sutton, 2021).

California—AB 2022, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in September 2022, will remove the word “squaw” from public places across the state. (AB 2022, 2022). The new law establishes a process and timeline for renaming and requires public agencies to no longer replace signs, interpretive markers, or any other marker or printed material with the discontinued name containing the word “squaw.” Map updates and sign replacements must use the new name.

ACTIONS BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER PUBLIC ENTITIES

For the most part, the names given to parks, schools, and the like are the responsibility of the local governments, boards, and administrators in charge of those facilities. Examples of renaming by these officials offer insights into the issues.

GOETHE PARK RENAMED RIVER BEND PARK

In 2008, the Board of Supervisors of Sacramento County changed the name of Goethe Park, located in Rancho Cordova, California, to Riverbend Park. The name change came about because it became known that Charles M. Goethe, after whom the park was initially named, was racist and xenophobic (Scrapbook Pages Blog, 2013). He was a member of several eugenics organizations that advocated involuntary sterilization of poor women (mostly from immigrant backgrounds), warned of Mexicans infiltrating the borders and spreading diseases, and opposed Asian immigration. Goethe had also been a noted educator and philanthropist, credited as founder of California State University, Sacramento, a major funder and promoter of environmental conservation, and a leader in the establishment of the San Francisco Academy of Sciences planetarium (Buck, 2017). On balance, however, the Supervisors believed that celebrating his name was not appropriate.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY BUILDING RENAMING

University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) has renamed Kroeber Hall (2021), LeConte Hall (2020), Barrows Hall (2020), and Boalt Hall (2020) in acknowledgment of the prejudiced views and actions of those for whom they had been named. Alfred Kroeber was a prominent anthropologist, considered the founder of the study of anthropology of the West, but he carried out “research practices that were always objectionable to many Native Americans and that society now recognizes as reprehensible and has made illegal,” including collecting remains and sacred funerary objects of Native American ancestors and other indigenous people from their graves without consent from tribes or individual descendants. Brothers John and Joseph LeConte came from a Southern slave-holding family, joined the Berkeley faculty after serving the Confederacy in the Civil War, and were noted faculty members in physics and geography, respectively. Joseph also was an outspoken racist who advocated for the disenfranchisement of Blacks. David Prescott Barrows, UC president from 1919 to 1923, was a white supremacist and colonialist who described Black people as politically incapable and corrupt, Filipinx as submissive, and Native Americans as without history. John Boalt, an attorney whose widow donated the funds that built the original law school building on the Berkeley campus, described the Chinese laborers coming into California as unassimilable murderers and thieves and successfully pressed for an 1882 federal ban on Chinese immigration.

The buildings were renamed after detailed, case-by-case formal reviews. Those proposing a renaming must prepare a report that discusses why the building was named after the person in question (e.g., scholarly achievements, service to the university, a philanthropic gift), whether there has been prior objection to the name, why the proposer believes the legacy of the namesake is at odds with the principles of equity and inclusion guiding the campus today—why the pernicious effects of giving the person positive recognition outweigh the person’s contributions—and the likely impact on members of the community if the name is retained or removed. The report is then reviewed, opportunities for making an opposing case are provided, additional research might be carried out, and then the committee makes a recommendation to the Chancellor. Both the Chancellor and the UC President must agree to any change.

In the four UC Berkeley reviews to date, the words and actions of the individuals for whom buildings had been named were found to be sharply at odds with the university’s responsibility to promote an inclusive, global perspective of the peoples and cultures of the world. The reviewers also concluded that placing the individuals in positions of honor, as naming does, was found to have a negative impact on members of the Berkeley community and their sense of belonging. A recommendation included in the review process is to maintain a public record on the action: “Whether or not a building’s name is removed, we believe it is historically and socially valuable to

retain a public record, perhaps in the form of a plaque in the building, which notes the building’s history of naming and the reasons for removing the name.” (Building Name Review Committee, 2022).

HASTINGS COLLEGE OF LAW RENAMING

Located in the City of San Francisco, the University of California, Hastings College of Law has proposed renaming the school, and as of September 2022, legislation has been signed into law authorizing them to do so together with Native American stakeholders.

A 2017 essay published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Briscoe, 2017) pointed out that Serranus Hastings, California’s first chief justice and attorney general and the college’s founder, promoted and financed “hunting” expeditions in which many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Native Americans from the Eden and Round Valleys and Yuki tribes were murdered. Hastings Chancellor and Dean David Faigman formed a committee to dive deeper into Hastings’ past and to provide recommendations. The committee consulted with the Round Valley Indian and Yuki tribes in preparing their report and proposed a number of steps that they termed “restorative justice,” including providing legal help to the tribes and memorializing the massacres in a prominent place on campus. Faigman submitted a formal report to the college’s Board of Directors in 2020 but did not advocate for a name change at that time. Indeed, he was quoted as commenting, “What would changing the name accomplish?” According to Faigman neither the college nor the tribal members’ communities had reached a consensus on the issue, and it was reported that the college had concerns that a name change could lead to a decline in applications and perhaps a loss of philanthropic and alumni support.

Resistance to a name change greatly diminished after the *New York Times* published an article (Fuller, 2021) that brought the matter to national attention and to the attention of members of the California state legislature. Consequently, the college’s Board of Directors voted to remove the name Hastings from the school, directing Dean Faigman to work with the California legislature to amend certain aspects of the Education Code to accomplish the change.

Faigman worked with members of California’s State Assembly and Senate to introduce legislation that would remove the name Hastings from the school and the college’s Board of Directors consulted with the Round Valley Indian Tribes and the Yuki Indian Committee to make final recommendations to the Legislature regarding a new name (Faigman, 2022). The resulting legislation (AB1936, 2022), was passed by the Legislature and was signed by the Governor in September 2022. It does not rename the school permanently but designates it the “College of the Law, San Francisco” for the time being and calls for a collaborative process to select a new name.

In a letter posted on the law school’s website, Dean Faigman states, “...I have come to understand that it is the right course for the College to take and a path that ultimately will lead to new opportunities and, indeed, national prominence for the law school. This does not diminish my respect for those with different perspectives... But it is time to move on” (Faigman, 2022).

CASES THAT OBTAINED MIXED RESULTS OR FAILED

There also are examples where efforts to remove harmful names in public spaces had mixed results or stalled entirely. The following examples draw on interviews we held with stakeholders and, in some cases, with elected

officials, as well as on published reports and media coverage. The examples illustrate some of the arguments made in opposition to change and procedural issues that can arise.

SQUAW VALLEY

Squaw Valley is a name given to settlements in Placer and Fresno counties, California, and formerly was the name of a ski resort that hosted the 1960 Winter Olympics. The ski resort was renamed to Palisades Tahoe in 2020 after a year-long process. Many other businesses in the area also have dropped “Squaw” from their names. However, efforts to change the name of the Fresno County community called Squaw Valley have stalled.

PALISADES TAHOE SKI RESORT

In 2021, ski resort officials spearheaded the effort to remove the pejorative term “squaw” from the resort’s name, reflecting that many consider this term to be derogatory, that social and cultural changes have made names such as this unacceptable, and acknowledging that local tribes, including the Washoe Tribe, were offended by the name. Resort officials got their Board’s okay to start the process of renaming, hired a consulting agency to engage the community, and investigated appropriate names for the resort, considering both business impacts and the need to be inclusive of the communities represented in the ski resort area. Internal staff performed archival research at the University of Reno to locate the etymology of the word “squaw” and published their findings on their website (Palisades Tahoe, 2022).

Staff provided several potential names to the Board, who made their recommendation to the CEO, who made the ultimate name-change decision. The officials we interviewed relayed that there was only a modest amount of backlash over the change from those that felt that their heritage or history would be lost with the name change. They also reported that the name change created a better relationship with local tribes and that the company has received positive feedback through their social media platforms.

The officials we interviewed noted that while the company was able to complete the entire review and renaming process in one year, they felt that their timeline was possible only because they are a private company with no other bureaucracy to intrude; public agencies are likely to need more time. They advised that although there are going to be concerns about a backlash against name changes, the opponents of such changes are likely to be only one subset of the populace and, while they tend to be the loudest, it doesn’t mean they are right.

SQUAW VALLEY, FRESNO COUNTY

Rename Squaw Valley Fresno County is an organization seeking to rename Squaw Valley, CA, a census-designated place with a population of about 3,500, to a name that is more inclusive to the community and, in doing so, to eradicate the use of a pejorative and racist term for Indigenous women. To date, the County Board of Supervisors has not acted on the name change, while activists have gathered a petition supporting a change with over 1,800 signatures (Anguiano, 2021; Montalvo, 2021).

Tribal leaders reported to us that a major obstacle to renaming the small settlement has been the renaming process itself. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors’ rules for a name change require an in-person meeting and local support. The advocates did hold a meeting but lacked the resources to host a standard, full-blown public meeting, especially during the pandemic. A contentious meeting at the Board of Supervisors at which about 15

proponents of the name spoke resulted in the leader of the group advocating the name change being escorted out of the meeting—he turned his back on the supervisors while speaking, telling them that that is how they had treated the advocates. While the supervisors have emphasized the importance of local support for a name change, advocates argue that the impact of the slur affects anyone who sees it, including travelers from other cities, states, and countries.

The rename organization has been a strong supporter of the Department of Interior’s declaration that squaw is a pejorative term and also have strongly supported AB 2022, the recently approved California legislation that requires statewide renaming of places and geographic features bearing the term “squaw.”

FORT BRAGG, CA

Fort Bragg is a small northern California city (population about 7,000) that is named after General Braxton Bragg, who served in the Mexican American War and the Confederate Army. After examining the issue for nearly a year and a half—September 2020 to January 2022—the review committee established to assess the issue was unable to reach agreement on a recommended course of action, so no change in name has been made.

In 2015, eight members of the California Legislative Black Caucus had proposed a name change, calling it a natural follow-up to the state’s decision to ban flying the Confederate flag, a step that was taken following the murders of Black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, by a white supremacist. In a letter requesting consideration of the change, the legislators called it a “needed discussion about the inappropriateness of any public entity promoting individuals that committed treason against our nation during the Civil War and fought to defend the defenseless cause of slavery” (McGreevy, 2015). At that time, city officials declined to make any changes.

According to a senior elected official that we interviewed for this study, the second 2020–22 consideration of the name change was motivated by George Floyd’s murder and the reckoning with racism that it inspired. The city established an 18-person commission charged with developing recommendations regarding a possible name change while also addressing broader issues of systemic racism (Fort Bragg, CA Citizens Commission, 2022).

The commission held 31 Zoom meetings from September 2020 to November 2021, comprising over 60 hours of discussion and deliberation. The meetings were reportedly contentious at times (Wutzke, 2022), although the vice mayor oversaw the committee and provided facilitation rules for speaking.

Community feedback was solicited through a bilingual questionnaire distributed via water bill inserts, social media, the city website, and city hall. A total of 1,649 online and paper responses were received. However, the commission cautioned that they did not have a way to determine whether some had filled out multiple surveys. They also noted that the survey distribution methods likely missed portions of the local populace and might have attracted responses from outside the area. According to the community questionnaire, 57.4% opposed a name change, 38.2% supported a name change, and the rest were undecided.

By the time the committee reported to the city council, its membership had shrunk to 10. Of the 10, 6 supported the name change and 4 opposed it. Proponents for change emphasized Bragg’s role as a former slaveholder and a Confederate soldier and the role of the garrison named after him in the suppression of Native Americans. Among the opponents, some saw the Bragg name as having been conferred for his antebellum leadership and believed that the name change was unnecessary because the city name had never been intended to honor Bragg as a

Confederate army leader or slaveholder. Opposition also was voiced by residents who feared that the name change would be costly to government as well as to businesses and would create confusion in property records and other official documents. Still others opposed recommending a name change because the town was so divided on the issue.

Those we interviewed believe that residents could not agree on a name change due to several factors.

Residents, across race, ethnicity, and age, could not agree on a shared history of Fort Bragg. Residents challenged each other's historical narratives of how the city was formed and named. For example, some argued that the military outpost was named after Bragg in 1857, before the Civil War. Others noted that the garrison and the reservation that it was established to enforce were abandoned for several years in the 1860s and the town only grew up again after the war, when it was (re)named after Bragg.

The city has been going through economic change and cultural shifts and, to many, the proposed name change felt like another loss. The city grew up as a blue collar community engaged in the timber and fishing industries, but as extractive industries declined, tourism became a larger part of the city's economic base. Many saw downturns in the extractive industries as resulting from environmental protection policies that treated the economic consequences to the community as incidental costs. The COVID pandemic had taken a hit on tourism, exacerbating insecurities. As a result, some in the community saw the name change as yet another threat to their economic survival and their identity.

One person who had opposed the name change told us that many residents have an emotional tie to their hometown and view the name change as an assault from outsiders. This person also commented that proponents of the name change did not give Bragg credit for his years of military service before the Civil War and likened his treatment to dismissing George Washington or Thomas Jefferson's many contributions to the founding of the country because these Founding Fathers had been slaveholders.

Although the committee did not vote to change the city name, they were able to agree to several goals (Fort Bragg, CA Citizens Commission, 2022):

- Demonstrate the City's commitment to being inclusive and welcoming to all people
- Increase knowledge and understanding about Indigenous culture and local history
- Clarify that we do not in any way associate ourselves with the Confederate legacy
- Optimize our future as an attractive and prosperous place to live and visit
- The commissioners decided not to recommend action on the name at this time, but they made six recommendations aimed at building a more participatory, informed, and just dialogue on the issues that they uncovered during their work together.
- Create city policy to prioritize the return of land to local coastal tribes.

- Formalize an official agreement to work with local coastal tribes to recognize their sovereignty and continued stewardship of the land.
- Support the creation of a cultural center.
- Appoint a local history working group.
- Appoint a City Council Ad Hoc Committee to facilitate discussion with the school district and local tribes to support the schools in presenting a more complete and inclusive history of the local area.
- Support an outdoor event to encourage the local arts, sciences, and culture/economy, a North Coast Community Day, to showcase [Fort Bragg's] diverse community and encourage a robust economy.

The Commission's final presentation can be found at <https://srp-prod-public-pdfs.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/gQHB-TnbhFXRRHkN4JGYXLI3tGA.pdf>.

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY RENAME B.K. ROBERTS HALL NOW!

Florida State University (FSU) College of Law's B.K. Roberts Hall is the subject of a proposed name removal, which so far has failed. A campaign to rename the building has been organized by FSU Law School graduate Danni Vogt who, as a law student in the 1980s, learned that the building's namesake was an ardent segregationist. Roberts, who had been a Florida Supreme Court justice, had taken actions, some in defiance of the U.S. Supreme Court, to block Black students from attending the FSU law school (Vogt, 2022). Incensed students sought to have the FSU law library, then under construction, named after the litigant (by then an attorney) who had been denied entry to FSU. However, the legislation that they proposed morphed into a minority student scholarship, the library remained without an honorific name, and the Roberts Hall name stayed in place.

Several years ago, Vogt took the issue up again and created an online petition and website to support a name change. In 2017, FSU President John Thrasher formed an advisory panel to review the campus's names and markers. The following year, the advisory panel recommended that FSU ask the Florida State Legislature to repeal the 1973 bill that had named B.K. Roberts Hall. Such bills have now been introduced three times, but all have failed, most recently in spring 2022 when the legislative session ended without a hearing for the proposed legislation.

Noting that the advocates for the change had put considerable time and effort into the proposal and had built a broad band of supporters, Vogt expressed hope that the bill will be introduced again next year. Meanwhile, FSU has removed the Roberts name from the side of the building.

SURVEY OF STATE DOTs

After a concerted effort to reach out to state DOT officials and invite them to participate in our survey of practices regarding names and monument, we received responses from 30 state DOT officials. An additional five declined to complete the survey, with several commenting that the topic was considered to be a political issue that would be handled in their state through legislative processes. We received no response from 15 states.

Of the states that provided substantive responses, 18 indicated that under their states' laws, the state legislature is the ultimate decision-maker for naming, renaming, or removing names and installing or removing monuments on state property. In these states, the DOT reported that it refers inquiries to the legislature and takes no further action unless a legislative directive is received. The process for legislative action varied. Several state DOTs pointed us to legislation that specifically stated that the naming of state facilities required legislative authorization. In some states, a bill would have to be introduced for each naming or renaming, while in other states, requests are referred to a legislative committee. The committee then reviews the requests during the legislative term (often in a single meeting) and makes a decision or tables the request. In either case, support from a local legislator is either required or recommended.

In other states, the process depends on the type of facility to be renamed (federal aid highway, state highway, county or city street or highway.) Respondents from five states indicated that the Transportation Commission or Secretary of Transportation makes the decision, while two states indicated that internal staff (e.g., head of right of way or chief traffic engineer) has been delegated the authority to make decisions about naming. A few states use an administrative committee to review naming proposals for local and state facilities, sometimes the same committee that reviews names for federal maps.

Among the states where the DOT plays a role in naming facilities, most reported that they had not had direct involvement in removing harmful names on their property or in removing or relocating harmful monuments. However, they did have policies in place that affect how the naming of facilities or monument placement takes place. The process is usually straightforward. In nearly all states, it is incumbent upon local residents to initiate requests for naming or renaming of transportation facilities. The most common namings are for local military heroes, fallen enforcement officers, or drunk-driving victims, although local sports heroes, distinguished political leaders, and other notable community members were also identified as honorees.

Those making the request fill out a form or write a letter stating the name of the person to be honored and the reason for honoring the person. Some states have laws that require that requests be initiated by a member of the legislature (and direct interested parties to their local representatives to initiate the process) or ask that the request be accompanied by an endorsement from a legislator. Some state DOTs accept applications and then seek required legislative endorsement before action is taken. However, a few states have established administrative committees that are responsible for making determinations about names and monuments.

Many of the states responding to the survey keep a publicly available list of named facilities and post proposed namings on the internet. Some have additional rules, e.g., only a deceased person can be honored, or a biographical statement for the proposed honoree must be provided and will become part of the permanent record. Some states require the sponsor of the naming to pay for signage and might also require the sponsor to replace signage if they so desire when it becomes worn or damaged.

Several DOTs reported that they do not get involved with informal names for state highways (e.g., when a state highway has an official number but locally is called by another name) or with names of streets and highways owned by federal, county, or local entities. Others have state legislation that governs naming of both state and locally owned streets and highways.

Usually, the named facility is required to be in the vicinity of an area of significance for the person named (e.g., their hometown, or in cases of crash victims and officers killed in the line of duty, near the site of the death), and only one name per stretch of highway is permitted.

Whether or not they were involved in naming, most of those who responded to the DOT survey did not know of current instances in which state-owned transportation facilities had controversial names. However, several mentioned cases in which local or regional transportation agencies, parks departments, or the Federal Department of Interior faced an issue with controversial monuments, statues, busts, facilities names, place names, or names for natural features. These problematic names can affect the state DOT to the extent that street and highway signs listing them are needed.

Three respondents reported that even seemingly neutral names can be found to be controversial on later consideration. As one example, a family requested that a stretch of highway be named after a family member killed in a car crash that also killed several others. The honoree was later found to be at fault in the crash, and the families of the other victims were incensed that the at-fault driver would be honored by a named highway.

Another example respondents gave involved a state trooper in a high-speed chase that ended with the trooper dying in a crash. A legislator from the deceased trooper's hometown proposed to honor him by naming a highway bridge after him. However, news reports following the incident reported that the officer had been disciplined repeatedly for excessive use of force and reckless endangerment. This information led to public protests and eventually to the withdrawal of the naming proposal.

Monuments within the state right of way are less common than namings. Most states reported that they do not ordinarily permit monuments in the right of way and would do so only if it could be assured that the monument would not pose a safety hazard, such as a crash risk or a distracted driving risk. However, a number of states reported that the local populace often erects informal memorials to loved ones who died in traffic accidents in the right of way. A handful of respondents said that such monuments are removed immediately if they pose a hazard. Otherwise, they are removed at the next litter control cleanup. Other respondents said that they do not disturb such informal displays unless they are deteriorated or a hazard.

In one case reported to us, historic markers installed along a state highway became controversial because there was disagreement about the accuracy of the history relayed. The markers focused on the deaths of settlers at the hands of Native Americans whereas more Native Americans had died at the hands of settlers in the event commemorated. The text for the markers was the responsibility of the state historic preservation office, but the DOT had responsibility for sign installation, so both agencies were challenged. While no official decision was made about the markers, they were removed for a road project and not reinstalled.

These additional examples illustrate how road signs and markers can be problematic.

In Washington State, highway markers for Confederate leader Jefferson Davis were removed, one in 1998 and a second in 2010. Initially, each marker was placed in storage and then relocated to a park along with historic interpretive signage. After a few years, both the markers and the interpretive signage were removed. The markers eventually were given to a private party, who placed them on a plot of land along US 99, but by 2020 they had been vandalized, wrapped in metal cages, and largely unreadable (RoadsideAmerica.com, 2022).

In Missouri, the Ku Klux Klan participated in the state's adopt-a-highway program, and the signs announcing their participation were repeatedly stolen. The state DOT limited the number of times that they would replace signs, and the Klan chose to withdraw from the program.

In Maryland, in 2019, the state DOT removed road signs to Negro Mountain (on the border of Pennsylvania and Maryland) due to the racial sensitivity of the term. Maryland DOT also removed a Patty Cannon Historical Marker. (Patty Cannon was a notorious slave trader and murderer.) Negro Mountain had been the subject of earlier legislative efforts at renaming that had failed, apparently in part because there are varying local tales about how the mountain got its name. One story is that it was named to honor a Black man who died bravely on the mountain. Another story is that the name was given by the Spanish after the dark shadows that the mountain casts late in the day. While the DOT has now used its authority over items in their right of way to remove the signage with these problematic terms and names, the survey respondents reported that they are trying to develop a more formal process for removing or replacing harmful names. Currently, the state's Cultural Resources Office holds public meetings with affected communities and handles requests for renaming. Maryland DOT officials stated that they intend to work with the Cultural Resources Office to create a list of offensive names that would be banned from state usage along highways.

Several state DOT respondents commented that their leadership had expressed an interest in being more proactive about harmful names and monuments on their rights of way. In addition to Maryland, Nevada respondents reported interest in creating a list of harmful or derogatory names as a starting point for considering renaming requests. Respondents from Ohio and New York named the Southern Poverty Law Center's publication on confederate monuments (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022) and Hatewatch (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022) as sources of information about harmful names and their locations. Several additional state DOTs are watching the developments in the Department of Interior and in Congress regarding name changes because they would have mapping and signage changes as well, and also because significant changes could have budget implications.

DISCUSSION

We set out to identify best practices for Caltrans (and more generally, state DOTs) to use in considering naming, name changes, and monument placement or removal on DOT properties. Because relatively few cases have been reported in the literature or news media involving derogatory names and controversial figures that directly involve state DOTs, we looked widely for examples that could be informative for state DOTs. We found examples from other countries and other states and cases involving naming of places, buildings, natural features, parks, and transportation facilities, as well as monuments placed on public property, including street and highway rights of way. We report both successful and unsuccessful cases in which renaming or monument removal has been sought because both provide insights into the issues that are raised. Our surveys and interviews of state DOTs, stakeholders, and public officials were informed by what we learned from the literature review, and they provided valuable information on processes used and issues that arose.

Many of our examples deal with slurs against Blacks and Native Americans or with Confederate names and monuments. However, these are not the only derogatory, hurtful names in use, as the lists of slurs referenced in Appendix C show. We did not capture discriminatory names based on sex, disability, and other identities in this report.

Our investigation shows that in a number of cases, names and monuments are not simple matters of history but indicate whose history is to be honored and elevated. In many cases, the history reported is partial, and sometimes it is mythical. Naming has been used not only to commemorate but also to intimidate. Especially when slurs are used, naming can function to exclude or discriminate against portions of the population. However, for many, identity is tied up with names and places, so changing names or removing monuments can have a heavy emotional content and can lead to ongoing or repeated public controversies.

Processes for considering naming and name changes on public property vary. Many states view naming as a political decision and reserve naming decisions for the legislature or require legislative consent. Some states have delegated the decisions to an administrative committee or to the affected agencies. In either case, most states have a formal process through which residents or other interested parties can request a name or a name change or, less frequently, can propose installation or removal of a monument on public property. Publishing a proposed name change or monument removal on websites is common.

Some leave it up to the initiator of a proposed change to document the reasons for it and to show public support (e.g., through petitions, surveys, or public meetings that they sponsor). However, the time, cost, and expertise necessary to do this can be unavailable to some stakeholder groups and can be burdensome enough to create a barrier to change, serving as a *de facto* position of support for the status quo.

Transportation agencies who responded to our survey indicated that they had had limited experience with the removal of harmful names or monuments, but we did learn of and reported on several telling cases ranging from commemorative markers honoring Confederate generals to signage that included slurs or controversial terms. A few state DOTs are taking steps to identify, catalogue, and remove hateful or hurtful names and monuments or at least to establish clearer processes for considering doing so.

Stakeholders commented that it is important to have a transparent process for naming and renaming facilities and installing or removing monuments, and that the process should include reasons for the decision reached. A major concern among stakeholders and civil rights advocates is that changing names one at a time is a costly process and can take years. Because of this, a number of stakeholders and advocates are seeking broader action to remove all names found to be unacceptable in today's culture, with a deadline for affected interests to decide what the new name should be, where a removed monument should be placed, and so on. Actions at the federal and state level, including in California, are beginning to do that.

The emphasis to be given to local views versus broader statewide or national perspectives is another issue that the debates over names and monuments raise. Some officials, including the federal BGN, place great weight on local views. Others argue that names affect a broader public and therefore consideration should not be limited to local perspectives.

Racial, ethnic, and gender slurs are imbedded in thousands of names of places and natural features across the U.S. Several organizations have compiled lists of terms that are widely considered offensive, and some states referred

to these lists as useful starting points in discussions of naming issues. A few states are compiling their own lists. The U.S. Department of Interior has also identified derogatory terms in use, and recently established an advisory committee and process for accelerating their removal. This action is likely to have an impact on state agencies, including DOTs.

Names and monuments honoring Confederate leaders are heavily concentrated in Southern states but appear elsewhere across the country, including California. While there are those who argue that these Confederate artifacts are historical and reflect local heritage, there is growing support for the view that they celebrate white supremacy and should be removed from view or possibly placed in a museum or similar setting where their history can be fully enunciated.

A difficult issue raised by survey and interview participants is what to do about names commemorating individuals that are offensive to some groups but celebrated by others, e.g., Christopher Columbus and Junipero Serra, or those that honor individuals whose lives were exemplary in some ways but highly problematic in others, e.g., George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. While the aforementioned names are well known, many other facilities have been named after individuals who are unfamiliar to the public or whose memory has largely faded, and it was only after research uncovered the actions of the named person that the naming became an issue (e.g., Barrows, Boalt, Kroeber, and LeConte Halls at UC Berkeley, Goethe Park in Sacramento, Hastings Law School in San Francisco, and Fort Bragg, CA). The development of histories of the controversial individual can be useful, but at times, debates over the historical accuracy occur, as do debates over how to weigh laudable versus shameful views and actions identified in the histories.

RECOMMENDATIONS

California has a long history of naming facilities to memorialize individuals, but until recently, the state had not established policies for doing so, despite several rounds of discussion on the issues that naming raises (California Highways, n.d.). Recently, however, both legislative and administrative actions on naming have been taken.

The California Legislature has memorialized or dedicated a highway, bridge, or other component of a state highway through resolutions or, less frequently, through a bill. In 2019–20, the Senate and Assembly Transportation Committees recommended the following considerations for naming (California Department of Transportation, 2020).

1. Any person being honored must have provided extraordinary public service or some exemplary contribution to the public good and have a connection to the community where the highway is located.
2. When a resolution names a highway or structure in honor of an individual, the designee must have been deceased, except in the instance of elected officials, in which case they must be out of office.
3. The naming must be done without cost to the State. Costs for signs and plaques must be paid by local or private sources.
4. The author or a co-author of the resolution must represent the District in which the facility is located, and the resolution must identify the specific highway segment or structure being named.

5. The segment of highway being named must not exceed five miles in length.
6. The proposed designation must reflect a community consensus and be without local opposition.
7. The proposed designation may not supersede an existing designation unless the sponsor can document that a good faith effort has uncovered no opposition to rescinding the prior designation.
8. The author's office has contacted the Caltrans Legislative Affairs office to ensure that the highway segment and/or structure meet the requirements.

Administrative action also is underway. In September 2020, California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot, State Parks Director Armando Quintero, and Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin (now head of the California State Transportation Agency) announced a series of actions to identify and redress discriminatory names of features attached to the State parks and transportation systems. As part of this effort, Caltrans committed to a detailed review of all named assets located on the state transportation system and to the development of a proposal identifying those to be renamed or rescinded. "Transportation is meant to bring people together, bridge divides, cross immovable boundaries and connect people from all walks of life," Director Omishakin said. "Caltrans cannot accomplish this mission without addressing the specter of exclusionary, prejudiced place names located throughout the California State Highway system. While long overdue, the department is honored to stand with the Natural Resources Agency and help facilitate a new legacy celebrating diversity, equity and inclusion." (California Natural Resources Agency, 2020). Caltrans staff have informed us that they have developed a draft list of problematic names in the Caltrans right of way, but at the time of this writing, the list has not yet been released, and it is not reviewed here.

Based on the work done for this study, we have the following recommendations for Caltrans as it works to be proactive in addressing harmful names and monuments on the properties that it manages.

First, in moving forward on harmful names, we recommend that Caltrans continue to work to develop joint policy with the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names (CACGN), sponsored by the Natural Resources Agency and including members from several other state agencies and representatives of the Legislature and several stakeholder groups. Caltrans currently sits *ex officio* on this committee. A consistent approach across state agencies, agreed to through the CACGN, would add clarity to a process that can be difficult for many affected interests and could improve the fairness of the process.

Second, we recommend that Caltrans complete its work on racist, derogatory, and harmful names and terms in the Caltrans right of way (including monuments and signage), compare the list to existing databases prepared by other organizations as a preliminary check, and then seek public comments on the list and on proposed actions or options for change, which could include removing the name, monument, or signage, changing the name or terminology, or adding plaques offering a fuller history of the place or person.

For terms that are slurs, we recommend that Caltrans develop a policy and process for timely removal of any that are in the Caltrans right of way, for rejecting future names that include slurs, and if necessary or desirable, for renaming state-owned facilities. Because state highways already have a consistent numbering system, renaming after removal of a slur usually would not be required. The process for removing slurs should include public notice

(with information on why the change is being proposed) and opportunity for comment (including opportunities to suggest a new name for the facility, if desired).

Directional or informational signage to place names or natural features that include a slur or a problematic name will require a more extensive process involving locally affected interests as well as the broader public (who might not be as directly affected but still feel the negative repercussions of the name). Renaming might also require an application to the federal government to remove the slurs from federal maps and other references. The processes being followed by the Department of Interior to remove the term “squaw” from federal maps and by the Department of Defense to remove names honoring Confederate leaders from military facilities could offer useful precedents for proceeding.

For Caltrans facilities named after individuals, we recommend flagging names known to be associated with white supremacy or other discrimination based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, religion, or other serious wrongs. A publicly available Caltrans document on named highway facilities (California Department of Transportation, 2020) includes brief statements of the reasons supporting each naming, providing a useful starting point for such a review. Because many facilities are named after individuals who are not well known, research into the individual might be necessary, which could include a review of public statements, writings, news reports, and public records, for example. Assistance should be sought from university faculty members, librarians, or local historians.

Making a complete, carefully reviewed list of names in the Caltrans right of way with well-documented bios for each named individual would be an important step for those being honored, in addition to providing evidence in any cases where reconsideration is appropriate. Publishing this information online and in the state’s library archives not only would provide public notice and opportunity to comment but also create a valuable historical record.

As a related step, Caltrans should review its policies to make sure they have a clear, consistent approach for dealing with problematic names when the agency has been delegated authority to do so. Caltrans has a substantial body of rules and guidelines on signage and markers, and we recommend a comprehensive review of these policies to identify whether there are clearly stated ways of dealing with cases in which signage (or proposed signage) includes harmful names or terminology. Among the state documents that could be reviewed are the signage provisions of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) (<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/safety-programs/camutcd/camutcd-files>), which includes state adaptations of the federal MUTCD. Caltrans also has additional policies and procedures in place for signage of many types, including adopt-a-highway signs, outdoor advertising signs, victim memorial signs, and political campaign signs. (For links to specific programs, see <https://dot.ca.gov/SearchResults?q=signs>.) These established policies and procedures could be updated or augmented with additional guidance to deal with harmful names.

Third, we recommend clarifying what role the California Legislature wants to play in flagging and dealing with harmful names. As noted earlier, in some states, the naming of transportation facilities has been delegated to a committee or to individual agencies and, in others, the state legislature has exclusive authority over the process, handling naming requests and making all decisions. The California Legislature’s guidelines for naming highway facilities establish a policy similar to that of many other states in requiring a showing of merit, a connection to the locality in which the facility is located, support from elected officials representing the area, and community support. The guidance also is consistent with the federal approach to naming in its emphasis on local community

opinion. However, the guidance does not explicitly address the issue of harmful names and, if applied literally, would not allow removal or renaming (superseding of an existing designation) if any opposition to the change (item 7) exists, especially local opposition (item 6). Nor does the guidance deal with the issue of signage to offsite facilities and locations with harmful names. If it is the legislative intent to disallow name changes that have opponents, it is likely that almost any proposed name change would be disallowed under this policy. (Note that other states have had opponents to the removal of highway markers honoring Confederate generals, wishing to offer license plates celebrating the Confederacy, etc.) Harmful names could be handled by exception if the Legislature itself wants to remove a particular name despite opposition to such a change. However, if it is not the legislative intent to apply the “no opposition” criteria to situations where an existing name is problematic and a change is proposed by concerned parties, we recommend that further policy guidance be developed.

Whether the Legislature prefers to reserve state highway facility name changes to itself or to delegate the responsibilities (or a portion thereof) to administrative agencies, it would be useful to expand on the criteria for naming to consider not just the positive contributions of the individual but to also flag problematic actions or positions that they took and to weigh the balance of evidence in reaching a naming or renaming decision. Likewise, for terms in names that are derogatory, it would be useful to consider the harm done by continued use of the terms versus preserving the attachments that various interests might have to the names.

Caltrans could undertake a number of additional actions on its own initiative or in cooperation with the CACGN to further acknowledge and respect diversity and support equity and inclusion in the names appearing in its right of way. An important step would be to develop a well-structured process for the reconsideration of harmful names on its right of way, recognizing that proposals for change can be challenging and can trigger strong responses. The process could include the following:

- Promulgate and support a clear set of steps for naming and renaming facilities and for monument placement or removal. The process established at UC Berkeley provides an outline for requesting a naming or renaming, including the information to be provided and issues to be considered when it is necessary to balance a namesake’s contributions versus harms caused. The process provides public notice and offers an opportunity for a rebuttal or counterargument to be prepared and submitted. The resulting reports have been a few pages long and carefully reasoned. This process could serve as a useful starting point for other agencies. (See Appendix B for the Berkeley process guidelines.)
- Develop a standard application form and, if public surveys or petitions are to be encouraged or required, develop standard forms for members of the public to use when they are proposing a naming or monument installation or removal. We also recommend that if surveys are used, the eligible respondents be clearly specified—for example, eligibility could be limited to residents of X only, 18+ years only, California residents only, or any interested party. In addition, we recommend that survey administration rules be established to reduce the risk of multiple responses from the same person—for example, most online survey software has settings that prevent a person from filling out the same survey from the same browser or to use an authenticator to prevent more than one response per person. Authenticators also can be devised for mail surveys. For petitions, we recommend that they include a signature, name, and address so that signatures are verifiable if necessary. These measures avoid methodological shortcomings and reduce questions about legitimacy, both of which can undermine the work done.

- In cases of controversy, commission a neutral independent party, such as a librarian or historian not directly involved in the case, to review the application materials and any counter-arguments and augment the record if additional information is located.
- Set standard rules and procedures for commenting (e.g., whether name and address must be provided, whether people from outside the area or state can comment, whether businesses can comment, time limits for oral comments, whether oral comments can be submitted outside of meetings (e.g., by telephone) word limits on written comments, period allowed for written comments to be submitted). Rules should be accommodating of non-English speakers and people with disabilities.
- Consider holding an official meeting or a series of meetings to discuss the issues. It is preferable for state agencies to organize this step rather than expecting applicants to do so because applicants do not necessarily have the resources or expertise to organize and hold meetings effectively. As with other public meetings, the organizers should reach out to affected interests and announce the goal of the meeting, how it will work, why stakeholders should attend, and the time, place, and means of joining the meeting. Ground rules for participation should be clearly stated at the outset of the meeting, and participant buy-in should be sought. Allow for and offer additional opportunities for comment (e.g., by providing comment sheets, pens and pencils, and by allowing written comments to be submitted by a specified deadline). If conditions permit, allow for online as well as in-person participation. Provide for multilingual participation, and make arrangements to accommodate people with disabilities. Hold meetings at times that are convenient for the stakeholders and in neutral locations (e.g., city hall or public library meeting rooms). If possible, video record the meeting, and post the video so those who could not attend can review the discussion.
- Recognizing that large public meetings can be intimidating for some, if resources allow, also offer smaller, facilitated meetings or focus groups. Smaller meetings can be especially important in controversial cases.
- Establish a mandatory or advisory timeline to complete the steps involved in reviewing names and monuments. As an example, a timeline could be:
 - When an application is received, it is reviewed for completeness, and applicants are notified if additional information is needed (30–60 day review period).
 - Accepted applications are posted and circulated for comment. One or more public meetings might be scheduled during the comment period. After the public meetings, comments are permitted for an additional 30–60 days, subject to extension if a counterproposal is received or if additional research or meetings are necessary. Post counterproposals and comments for public review. Amendments to the proposal and counterproposals can be made during the review period. Comments can be curated before posting. (Likely time involved: 60–180 days, depending on the complexity and amount of debate over the proposal.)
 - Staff prepares a report for consideration by decision-makers, generally within six months of the close of the comment period.
 - A decision is ordinarily made within 18 months.

These steps and time limits are presented for illustrative purposes only, but having a clear process and deadlines provides clarity, better responsiveness, and more objectivity.

Finally, it would be useful for Caltrans to discuss best practices with the states identified in this report as having experience with harmful names and monuments in their right of way (Washington, Maryland) or expressing an interest in being proactive on such policies (Nevada).

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APPENDIX A. SURVEY AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STATE DOTS

Q 1. How frequently do you get requests/proposals for naming or renaming facilities, such as highways, bridges, overpasses, etc.? How about requests for the placement or removal of monuments or informational or commemorative signs or markers?

Q 2. Who has requested naming/renaming/installation/removal? (Could be elected officials, Native American tribes/bands, ethnic group leaders, NGOs, ...)

Q 3. Do you have a formal/established policy or process on how to deal with requests for naming or renaming facilities? Likewise, do you have a formal policy/process on the placement or removal of monuments, markers, etc.?

3.1. Who would consider a request for naming or renaming? For the placement of a monument or marker? (e.g., assigned to planning dept. or assigned to signage staff or committee, only the legislature can do this ...)

—If a COMMITTEE reviews requests: Composition of the committee (staff, stakeholders, elected officials ...)

—If STAFF: assigned to a particular office or division to handle? Do several divisions or offices get involved? (Which ones?)

3.2. Do you consult with a broader community as part of the process, e.g., send out a request for comments to your mailing lists, post it on your website, or hold a meeting before finalizing the decision?

3.3 If holding public meetings, do you receive assistance from other agencies, such as the Planning department or others? Where are they held?

3.4. Who is the ultimate decision-maker? (e.g., committee makes the decision, committee recommends action to agency head, or legislature must approve ...)

3.5. Have you identified specific factors to consider in reviewing a proposed naming or renaming, or a proposed placement or removal of monument, sign, etc.? (E.g., for a change of name, a factor could be whether the change could cause confusion, or whether there is agreement in the community or a division of opinion about the proposed change ...)

3.6. About how long does it take to go through the process?

3.7. Have there been any discussions about process improvements?

3.8. Is there documentation that you could share with us?

3.9. Can you provide an example or two? (If there is documentation, can we get a copy?)

Q 4. Has naming, monuments, markers etc. been controversial in your state?

If yes:

4.1. Has the issue come up regarding the state DOT specifically? What about other agencies? (Probe re other agencies, e.g., parks, schools, etc.)

4.2. Can you give us an example or two? (If there is documentation, can we get a copy?) Has your agency developed a list of potentially harmful names or made use of ones prepared by other agencies (e.g., federal Dept. of Interior list, list from other state agency ...)?

Q5. Has your agency identified a list of potentially harmful or controversial names, monuments, or markers on your right of way? (If yes, can we get a copy?)

Q 6. Does your agency initiate naming and name change proposals, or do you handle them only when requested?

Q 7. Anything else you would like to tell us about your process or experience?

OTHER AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

1. What specifically was the issue that you addressed: What was the name or monument being challenged? Where was it located? Who oversaw the place name or monument (agency such as Parks Dept. or Public Works or DOT)? When was a change first proposed? What is the status of the proposal? (If more than one proposal, review experience with the first one that was addressed and come back to later ones later in the discussion – or the experience that was most memorable and most likely to offer lessons learned).
2. What was the process for consideration of the name change/monument removal request? What public agencies or officials were involved?
3. How were you/your organization involved in the issue?
4. What motivated taking up the issue at this time?
5. Who else was involved – key individuals/organizations involved, either in favor or opposed?
6. How much time and effort did you/organization spend working on the issue?
7. What were the biggest issues in the renaming process monument removal process?
8. What lessons did you learn from this experience?
9. What advice would you give to people/organizations involved in a renaming/removal process?

10. What do you wish decision-makers knew more about the issues involved in renaming places/removing monuments?
11. What would you change in the process?
12. If you are involved in additional proposals for name changes or monument removals, what are they? (List only.)

1. Submitting a Proposal: Any member of the University community may initiate a review of the name by submitting a written proposal. Proposals should address all of the following requirements: The proposal should frame its argument consistent with the [Building Name Review Committee's stated principles](#).^{*} If an individual's life is consistent with some of these principles and inconsistent with others, the proposal must make a case for why some principles outweigh others. For example, the named individual may have provided extensive service to the University, conducted important research, or made other contributions. However, this same individual may have acted to harm members of various groups. The proposal should explain why pernicious effects outweigh the contributions. The proposal must make a compelling case for the removal of a building name by providing evidence, documenting the sources used, and explaining why those sources are reliable. The proposal may provide links to videos or other relevant online material prepared by the proposer.

2. Proposals should explicitly include:

Proposer's name and affiliation with UC Berkeley, or the name of your group and its affiliation. Please include contact information for yourself or one member of your group (phone and e-mail address), which will not be posted online.

What building name do you propose removing?

Why was the building named after this person? Was the name honorific or in recognition of a philanthropic gift (donation)?

What service, if any, did this person perform for the University?

What is the history of contesting the legacy of the building's namesake, if any? From the time the building was named up until the present, have individuals or groups objected to using this name?

Why do you believe that the legacy of the namesake is fundamentally at odds with the [principles guiding the campus today](#)? That is, explain why you believe that the legacy's pernicious effects outweigh the individual's contributions.

What is the likely impact on members of the University community if the name is retained or removed?

Please add any other relevant information or arguments.

3. After the committee receives a proposal through its submission process, it initiates a review.
4. Dissemination: An accepted proposal will be posted on THE [Building Name Review Committee website](#). Departments, administrators, faculty, staff, and students whose departments are located in the building will be contacted by e-mail, when possible. Alumni, parents, friends, and donors will be notified through Berkeley Online, a monthly e-newsletter. If possible, the family of the individual will be informed. The committee will

also contact Legal Affairs, Administration, Finance, the Vice Provost for Academic and Space Planning, and University Development and Alumni Relations (UDAR).

5. **Comments:** The committee will ask members of the campus community to comment on the proposal for 2–5 weeks from the date it is posted (proposals that do not receive many comments may have shorter review periods). Short comments are welcome. However, members of the campus community will have the opportunity to submit a position paper with the same level of detail and scholarship as that of the proposal. People who submit comments may indicate whether their comments are confidential, that is, for the committee alone, or whether they are willing to have their comments posted on our website.
6. **Post Proposal and Responses:** The committee will curate and post responses adjacent to the proposal on its website. Any party may revise its case at any time prior to the committee’s final report.
7. **Additional Research:** If needed (for example, if the cases submitted by the initiator and the commenters differ on basic facts), the committee may commission an independent analysis of the historical record concerning the naming of the building and the history of the relevant person(s) by a non-involved historian, lawyer, research librarian, or other competent party.
8. **Additional Comments:** Once the cases are posted, the committee will again welcome comments from the community for 2–4 additional weeks. If the committee sees fit, it will hold one or more open meeting(s) so that all members of the campus can express their views. It may also hold a meeting with just the proposer and commentators who provide a well-documented position paper.
9. **Report:** The committee will prepare an analysis and a recommendation for the chancellor. If the committee does not come to a consensus, they will write separate recommendations to the chancellor. The committee may also suggest posting plaques, exhibits, murals, or taking other actions that recognize the concerns of the various parties.

Chancellor and UC President make final approval of name change.

* BUILDING NAME REVIEW COMMITTEE PRINCIPLES

The legacy of a building’s namesake should be in alignment with the values and mission of the university. The values of UC Berkeley are expressed in our Principles of Community (<https://diversity.berkeley.edu/principles-community>):

We place honesty and integrity in our teaching, learning, research, and administration at the highest level.

We recognize the intrinsic relationship between diversity and excellence in all our endeavors.

We affirm the dignity of all individuals and strive to uphold a just community in which discrimination and hate are not tolerated.

We are committed to ensuring freedom of expression and dialogue that elicits the full spectrum of views held by our varied communities.

We respect the differences as well as the commonalities that bring us together and call for civility and respect in our personal interactions.

We believe that active participation and leadership in addressing the most pressing issues facing our local and global communities are central to our educational mission.

We embrace open and equitable access to opportunities for learning and development as our obligation and goal.

In deciding whether to remove a building name, we believe that the committee should be guided by two principles:

1. As stated in the Regents of the University of California Policy 4400: University of California Diversity Statement (<https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4400.html>):

The University of California renews its commitment to the full realization of its historic promise to recognize and nurture merit, talent, and achievement by supporting diversity and equal opportunity in its education, services, and administration, as well as research and creative activity. The University particularly acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention, and advancement of talented students, faculty, and staff from historically excluded populations who are currently underrepresented.

We view it our intellectual and ethical responsibility to promote an inclusive, global perspective of the peoples and cultures of the world, particularly in view of past and current scholarship in the United States that may omit, ignore, or silence the perspectives of many groups, such as ethnic minorities, people from non-European nations, women, lesbian, gay and transgender, and disabled people, among others.

2. Whether or not a building's name is removed, we believe it is historically and socially valuable to retain a public record, perhaps in the form of a plaque in the building, which notes the building's history of naming and the reasons for removing the name.

APPENDIX C. DEROGATORY NAMES AND CONTROVERSIAL MONUMENTS DATABASES

US Geological Survey Names: <https://www.usgs.gov/us-board-on-geographic-names/domestic-names> (United States Geological Survey, 2022)

Racist Place Names: <https://www.vocativ.com/news/244179/racial-slurs-are-woven-deep-into-the-american-landscape/index.html> (Brown et al., 2015)

Racial Slur Database: <http://www.rsd.org>

Confederate Monument Map: <https://www.splcenter.org/whose-heritage-map> (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022)