



The Legislature State of Texas

May 8, 2012

Ms. Sheri Shelby Krause
Chair, Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711-2276

Dear Madam Chair:

We write in opposition to the historical marker application submitted by the Texas Sons of Confederate Veterans. While we understand that their application has encountered some obstacles after its initial approval by the Texas Historical Commission and that the Commission makes the final determination regarding the content of historical markers, we cannot in good conscience stay silent on this subject.

Winston Churchill said that "history is written by the victors." This is apparently true except for the Civil War. Confederate apologists have spent almost 150 years trying to change the Civil War into something that it was not. Here's what it was: an insurrection against the United States government with the main goal of maintaining the institution of African slavery. Instead of facing that reality, Confederate apologists continue to try to rewrite history, couching it as a war in defense of states' rights.

As elected representatives, we must look no further than the Texas Capitol grounds to see evidence of this historical revisionism. Three enormous monuments to the Confederacy have sat on the Capitol lawn for over a century, proclaiming states' rights but making no mention of the horrors of slavery.

As the Chair of the Texas Historical Commission, I have no doubt that you favor historical accuracy. In that vein, should there be yet another marker on the Capitol grounds noting Texas' involvement in the Civil War, we believe it should quote extensively from the Texas declaration of secession, a February 1861 document that was written when Texas seceded. After all, who better knows why the Civil War was fought than those who actually fought it.

The declaration rails against the United States for "proclaiming the debasing doctrine of the equality of all men, irrespective of race or color — a doctrine at war with nature, in opposition to the experience of mankind, and in violation of the plainest revelations of the Divine Law."

It goes on to state that "[w]e hold as undeniable truths that the governments of the various States, and of the confederacy itself, were established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and


Ms. Sheri Shelby Krause
Page 2 of 2

their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependent race, and in that condition only could their existence in this country be rendered beneficial or tolerable."


That is the real Civil War: men united to preserve the fundamental wrong of one human owning another. Slavery was not a minor cause; it was part of its essential, detestable heart. The sooner that this is accepted — and the sooner that the markers that dot the Capitol lawn admit as much — the sooner all Americans, regardless of their race, color, or creed, can continue to form a more perfect Union.

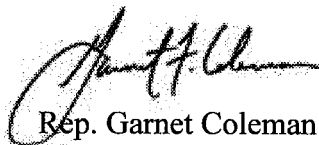
Again, we urge denial of the historical marker application submitted by the Texas Sons of Confederate Veterans. Should any future Confederacy-related applications be submitted, we ask that you notify us individually.

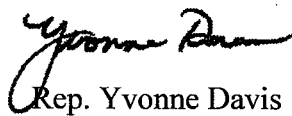
Sincerely,

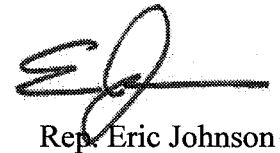

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CC: Members of the Texas Historical Commission
Mr. Terry Keel, Executive Director, Texas Facilities Commission