

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 30, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum,

We are writing to express serious concern about reports that signs within Harpers Ferry National Historic Park will be removed or altered to comply with President Trump's executive order to whitewash American history. We must face, seek to understand, and learn from our nation's history in order to continue our pursuit of a more perfect union. Hiding key information about our nation's history insults the memory of those who lived it and those who fought to uphold our American ideals.

Harpers Ferry National Historic Park is the site where abolitionist John Brown led a raid on the town's armory in 1859 with the goal of arming enslaved people to rebel against the institution of slavery. It is also the site of the Battle of Harpers Ferry, a significant battle during the Civil War—a war fought over the future of slavery in our nation.

On September 15, it was reported that Interior Department officials have ordered the removal or covering up of more than 30 signs at Harpers Ferry National Historic Park, which is located on the southwestern border of Maryland, where our state intersects with Virginia and West Virginia. The signs reportedly include references to racial discrimination and racial animus toward formerly enslaved people.

The National Park Service (NPS) has a record of providing Americans with unbiased information about American heritage, culture, and land. This decision to censor narratives about the darker side of American history—the ramifications of which are still felt today—contradicts NPS's core mission to preserve historic places and accurately tell the story of American history and heritage. It also jeopardizes the public's trust in NPS as an unbiased source of historic and cultural information.

We urge you to immediately reverse course on any and all efforts to erase important components of American history and maintain the factual historic information included at Harpers Ferry National Historic Park and all National Park sites.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator