

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 3, 2016

Dr. David J. Skorton
Secretary
Smithsonian Institution
P.O. Box 37012
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Secretary Skorton:

We write with grave concerns regarding recent reports that the historical nature of the life of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas is not represented in the newly opened National Museum of African American History and Culture. Excluding Justice Thomas' story from this institution denies its visitors an important representation of overcoming adversity to reach great heights.

Justice Thomas was born in Pin Point, Georgia, a small African-American Community outside Savannah. From humble beginnings, Justice Thomas rose to attend Yale Law School. After the retirement of the first African-American Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, Justice Thomas was confirmed as the second African-American to serve on the Supreme Court.

The background and accomplishments of Justice Thomas are worthy of inclusion in the museum on their own merits. Justice Thomas' contributions to the judicial system through his appointment to the highest court in the country cannot be discounted. It is a disservice to his legacy and to the history of this nation to mention his name in a single caption, but provide no other exhibit showcasing his story.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture states that it is an institution where "anyone is welcome to participate, collaborate, and learn more about African American history and culture." Justice Thomas' exclusion from the new museum has led some to draw conclusions of a political bias in the curation of an institution that should be above reproach. With this in mind, we insist that you provide an explanation about the conspicuous absence of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas from the new museum, and of any future plans to feature him in a permanent exhibit.

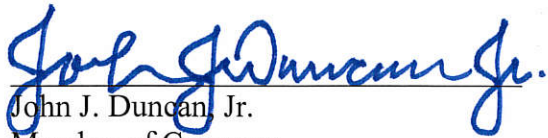
Sincerely,



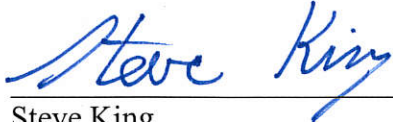
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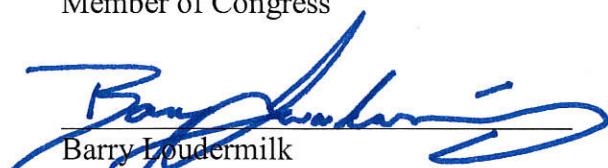
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Dave Brat
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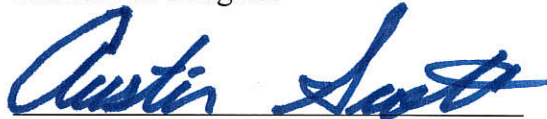
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