



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams  
Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers  
Tuesday, November 21, 2017**

Good morning Co-Chairs Finkelpearl and Walker, and the members of the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers. My name is Eric L. Adams, and I am the Brooklyn borough president, representing the 2.6 million residents who call our borough home.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Commission on how the City should address monuments seen as oppressive and inconsistent with the values of New York City. The work being done is an important self-reflection upon our history, and the scars of that history, as we continue to work to become a more perfect union.

There has been wide public outcry about the need to revisit existing monuments that honor individuals with checkered pasts, and it is an important conversation that must take place. At the same time, we must build up our communities to recognize the rich and diverse history of individuals that strove against all odds to improve the quality of life of countless during a time when their efforts went largely unrecognized, and subsequently, were not honored by the decision makers that often did not look like, or experience the same New York City, as them.

It was in this vein that in July of 2015, I wrote letters to the Department of the Army and members of Congress calling for the immediate removal of names honoring those who fought to preserve slavery in America from Fort Hamilton in Bay Ridge. I still believe this is a worthy call in Fort Hamilton and throughout Brooklyn and New York City.

In that very same letter, I called for the convening of a commission of historians and local leaders to identify other historical figures more befitting of recognition than those that took up arms against the United States of America.

Today, I renew that call, but also expand upon its vision.

I believe that there are more than enough historical figures and campaigns that worked individually or collectively to build a Brooklyn and New York City that accommodates all and is reflective of our diverse history and community fabric.

At the same time, New York City has more than enough venues to honor these individuals or movements. Imagine, for example, the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Municipal Building in Downtown Brooklyn, the Lena Horne Bandshell in Prospect Park, or perhaps the future archway in Sunset Park named in honor of NYPD Detective Wenjian Liu.

I urge the Commission to go beyond its existing mandate and make recommendations to identify which existing or new monuments, markers, and/or statues could be renamed or built to honor the men and women of color, our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters, and the immigrants that made New York City what it is today and what it will be tomorrow.

If the Commission refuses this task, I call upon my fellow borough presidents to join me to do this work on their behalf.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today, and I look forward to the recommendations of the Commission.