

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Honorable Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III
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Honorable Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III:

Thank you for your continued service to the Smithsonian Institution in a time of great upheaval. I need not remind you of your statement to *New York Times*, concerning the ongoing national debates about our national symbols: “Some of these need to go.”¹

The National Portrait Gallery’s “Struggle for Justice” exhibit currently displays a bust of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood. The exhibit’s mission is to honor civil rights leaders who have fought injustices for disenfranchised or marginalized groups throughout the United States. While some support how Sanger’s clinics and services are implemented today, she, in fact, fought *for* more radical racial injustices – claiming “we want to exterminate the Negro population.”²

Sanger was a proud eugenicist who sought to “purify” the American population through birth control, seeking to breed “the gradual suppression, elimination and eventual extinction stocks – those human weeds which threaten the blooming of the finest flowers of American civilization.”³ Due to her extensive history of promoting racism and eugenics, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York – home of Sanger’s flagship Planned Parenthood clinic – even decided to remove her name from their Manhattan facility.⁴

In light of her racist goals, I urge you to remove the bust of Margaret Sanger in the “Struggle for Justice” Exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery. Sanger’s mission to eliminate African Americans is the exact opposite of someone who fought to achieve civil liberties. This exhibit includes civil rights champions like Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King Jr., who fought for civil rights for African Americans in the United States. In contrast, Sanger and her legacy deserve no place alongside these figures. A woman who worked to eliminate the black population from the United States does not reflect justice.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/business/smithsonian-lonnie-bunch-corner-office.html>.

² <https://libex.smith.edu/omeka/files/original/d6358bc3053c93183295bf2df1c0e931.pdf>.

³ <https://www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/webedition/app/documents/show.php?sangerDoc=306641.xml>

⁴ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/07/23/racism-eugenics-margaret-sanger-deserves-no-honors-column/5480192002/>.

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Sincerely,



Rand Paul, M.D.
United States Senator