

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1309

June 29, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Admiral Michael Gilday
Chief of Naval Operations
Department of the Navy
1300 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1300

Dear Admiral Gilday:

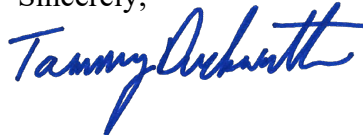
I write to thank you and offer my support for your leadership in ordering the United States Navy (USN) to draft an order similar to the policy implemented by the United States Marine Corps (USMC) prohibiting the public display of the Confederate Battle Flag on all public spaces and work areas on USN installations, ships, aircraft and submarines. Ridding the USN of a toxic symbol of racism, hatred and bigotry which has long divided our Nation will help to strengthen unit cohesion, while bolstering good order and discipline.

Your leadership in ordering the removal of public displays of the flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, an enemy force that fought against the United States in the Civil War to preserve and expand the rights of States to sanction the owning, selling, raping and killing of enslaved Black Americans, will also honor Black American sailors whose contributions, service and sacrifice have too often been overlooked in USN history.

Few Americans realize that Black Americans naval service pre-dates the creation of the United States of America, with evidence indicating that Black sailors valiantly manned Continental Navy gunboats during the Revolutionary War. Furthermore, USN records indicate that approximately 16 percent of all enlisted sailors were Black Americans in the War of 1812, and during the Civil War, Black Americans served on nearly every USN vessel, with six Black sailors earning the Medal of Honor for gallantry in combat.

I appreciate the swiftness of your action in announcing the development of a policy based on the USMC detailed guidance only one day after receiving my letter requesting such action. Once the order is drafted, I request that you provide my office with a copy of the USN policy banning public display of the Army of Northern Virginia's Confederate Battle Flag and its depiction across all installations, ships, aircraft and submarines. Finally, I encourage you to remain steadfast in your order, which represents the USN's Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment in action.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator