

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1309

June 29, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

General David Berger
Commandant of the Marine Corps
Department of the Navy
1300 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1300

Dear General Berger:

I write to thank you and offer my support for your leadership in ordering the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to remove public displays of the Confederate Battle Flag on USMC installations. Prohibiting the display of the flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, an enemy force that waged war against the United States of America to preserve and expand the rights of States to sanction the owning, selling, raping and killing of enslaved Black Americans was long overdue. However, the USMC deserves commendation for once again being the leader among all service branches in taking bold, decisive action to strengthen unit cohesion and bolster good order and discipline.

Your moral leadership honors the service, sacrifice and contributions of Black Americans who have served with the USMC dating back to the American Revolutionary War. As our Nation approaches Independence Day, we should honor and recognize that as early as 1776, just one year after the formation of the USMC, a dozen Black American Marines bravely fought for our independence and freedom from the Kingdom of Great Britain. While there is nothing to be proud of in recognizing that full integration of Black Americans in the USMC took another 183 years, your leadership in removing a toxic symbol of racism, hatred and bigotry in the present marks an important step in continuing to make the USMC lives up to its Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

I commend you for your decisive leadership and being a catalyst for much needed change addressing systemic racial disparities and injustices throughout our military services. Your display of moral courage demonstrated true leadership. Most importantly, you led by example in offering a steadying force to Marines during this uncertain time. Your decision to remove and ban the Confederate Battle Flag has inspired your sister service to follow in your footsteps and I am confident that USMC will lead the way in demonstrating to the U.S. Department of Defense how this change strengthens unit cohesion and combat effectiveness.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator