

Sully District Council of Citizens Associations



**P.O. Box 230042
Sully Station, VA 20120-0042**

1 March 2022

To the Fairfax County Redistricting Advisory Committee:

The Sully District Council of Citizens Associations at its 26 January 2020 meeting voted to recommend the Redistricting Advisory Committee Meeting not change the name of Sully District.

The Sully District Council of Citizens Associations was established by the citizens of Sully District when Sully District was established after the 1990 census. The Council would like to express our strong opposition to the recommendation of the 2022 Redistricting Advisory Committee for the renaming of the Sully District. Based upon our review of the Advisory Committee's draft report to the Board of Supervisors, we do not believe that the primary reasons cited in the report as justifying the name change for the Sully District are valid.

We will agree with the finding that District Evaluation Criteria #4 (page 6 of the report) is applicable in that the Sully District was named after the Sully Plantation, and that the workers at this location were enslaved. However, we do not believe that either Criteria #1 or #3 can be applied to the Sully District.

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In particular, we fail to see how Criteria #3 - Is the name related to the Confederate past? - is applicable. A quick search of the Wikipedia website determined that the owner of Sully - Richard Bland Lee - was the younger brother of Maj. Gen. Henry ("Light Horse Harry") Lee, who was the father of Robert E. Lee. So, at best, the "Confederate relationship" is that of being the uncle of Robert E. Lee. We would also note that Richard Bland Lee died on March 12, 1827, some 34 years prior to the beginning of the Civil War. We do not believe that a family relationship of this nature validates Criteria #3.

In addition, we did not see any valid reason cited in the report of why Evaluation Criteria #1 - Does the name violate the spirit or explicit meaning of the One Fairfax policy - apply only to the Sully District. If the use of any former plantation name is unacceptable in Fairfax County as a violation of the "One Fairfax " how can Mount Vernon be retained? Has there been any discussion of changing Mount Vernon to the "Washington District"? That would seem to maintain the historical relationship with George Washington, would do nothing to change the name of the estate, but would remove the linkage to slavery. We could envision a concern relative to Criteria #1 being deemed appropriate to some degree to any and all of the current supervisor district names.

We also noted the expansive public interaction which took place when the potential renaming of the Springfield District was being considered. Apparently, in the absence of any citizen requests for this action to be further investigated, the question was dropped. With that being the case, I would offer the suggestion for the group's consideration that the name of the Sully District be changed only upon the conduct of a ballot referendum to that effect across all of the election precincts which define the Sully Supervisory District We do not personally believe that a change of this nature should be left just to a simple majority vote by the current Board of Supervisors members.

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As an example of the historical import of the Sully name, Sully District's association with Chantilly was instrumental in the invitation of Sully Supervisor Michael Frey to the World War One commemoration activities in Chantilly, France, in 2014 (http://www.sullydistrict.org/SDCPhotoGallery/Sully_District_Photo_Gallery/Pages/Armistice_Day_11_Nov_2014.html).

We believe that we need more interpretive signage (for example at Sully Plantation), better Virginia history education not an erasure of history. If we acknowledge the truth of our history, we can teach all ages that people are people, regardless of our differences. That slavery was wrong. In today's world, we use terms like kidnapping, human trafficking, etc. Might the truth extend past historical wrongs to today?

We could offer further comments in regard to this matter, but believe the committee can understand our key points. Please feel free to further circulate these thoughts as you think appropriate.

We ask that the Fairfax County Redistricting Advisory Committee not include the Sully District as a candidate for renaming..

Submitted by:

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- Note that this document is posted at
http://www.sullydistrict.org/references/20220301_SullyRenaming.pdf