

Confederate License Plate - DENIED!

Written by Forward Times Staff
Friday, 11 November 2011 13:07



Voting to deny this inappropriate and ill-conceived concept of a state issued confederate license plate in the second largest state in the union was the right thing to do.

Houston, TX – Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, a Senior Member of the House Judiciary Committee released the following statement in regards to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Board vote on the confederate flag state issued license plate:

“Although Governor Rick Perry came out against the state issued confederate flag license plate it’s unfortunate that we still had to deal with the vote by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Board – one day before Veteran’s Day. To many of us it would be more appropriate to honor the nation’s soldiers who supported the survival of America by celebrating the flag of the United States of America. All of us would support placing the United States flag on our license plate. The vote by the Board to deny this ill conceived state issued confederate flag license plate is a welcome decision.

“As many of you may be aware, many Texans had taken a firm stand against the proposed state issued confederate flag license plate proposed for the state of Texas. As a Senior Member of the United States House Judiciary Committee, I believed this proposed state action was ill conceived and may even have had the appearance of a violation of the Equal Protection of the Law clause. The act of placing on a state issued license plate a confederate flag that has been traditionally the symbol of fear, oppression and intimidation that seemingly may target certain groups of Texans and Americans may have also been a denial of their rights to equal protection under the law.

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“No one wishes to deny our history as a state. But we as leaders should take every opportunity to support that which unites our citizenry – not that which divides us. Reminding those among us of their painful past has no place in celebrating our great state.

“License plates are designed to promote tourism and commerce, to create positive identity and awareness, and to showcase those riches that make our state unique. The Confederate flag, long recognized in our generation as a symbol of slavery, racism, and defeat, accomplishes none of those purposes. Those wishing to study the historical significance of this flag and our Confederate past should instead turn to a book.

“This issue has been visited many times over. African Americans in South Carolina have taken offense to the rebel flag flying over its statehouse, prompting its removal in 2000. To date, it remains a sore spot. Confederate theme-images have caused the same debate at numerous colleges and schools nationwide and even locally. Texas does not need to go down that road.

“Ill-intended or not, why would Americans want to be reminded of a legalized system of involuntary servitude, dehumanization, rape and mass murder? It's as undesirable as another ethnic community wishing to relive the Holocaust.

“As we all know, Texas seceded from the United States in 1861, and joined the Confederate

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States of America during the American Civil War. During the war, slavery in Texas was little affected, and prices for slaves remained high until the last few months of the war. The number of slaves in the state increased dramatically as the Union Army occupied parts of Arkansas and Louisiana. Slaveholders in those areas often moved their slaves to Texas to avoid having them emancipated. By 1865 there were an estimated 250,000 slaves in Texas. Many planters, however, lost part of their workforces temporarily to the Confederate Army, which impressed one-quarter of the slaves on each plantation to construct defensive earthworks for the Texas coast and to drive military supply wagons.

“I am pleased that the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles rejected the proposal of approving a new license plate depicting the Confederate flag. Those who were advancing such a plan did not reflect the sentiments of most Texans.

“On the battlefield, our military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind. Issuing a license plate with the confederate flag as its symbol is not the way we should honor our American Veterans who fought for a unified America.

“There is no concern with studying or honoring history, and Americans believe everyone has the right to choose his or her heroes. However, that right should not extend to co-opting a state issued license plate to display an emblem that is offensive to many. It is the choice of all Americans on who they honor. It is not their unfettered right to seek a state issued confederate flag license plate.

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“Our Nation has taken pride in honoring those who fought and died in battle and welcomes those who want to observe the recognition of the Civil War; but there are many other ways to pay tribute to the dead and the cause for which they died. Those that desire to honor the Civil Wars confederate effort can do so in many private ways but not through a state of Texas issued license plate that represents the affirmation by the entire state of Texas of a symbol that equals fear, intimidation and oppression and the maintenance of the bondage of other human beings.”{jcomments on}