

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum;

I write today with concern regarding the Department of Interior's (the Department) implementation of Executive Order 14253 "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," and Secretarial Order 3431, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History." EO 14253 directs the Department to identify "monuments, memorials, statues, markers, or similar properties" under the Department's jurisdiction, and to ensure that such properties do not contain content that "inappropriately disparages Americans past or living," directing the Department to focus instead on "the greatness of the achievements and progress of the American people or, with respect to natural features, the beauty, abundance, and grandeur of the American landscape." SO 3431 subsequently implemented this EO and directs the heads of the land management Bureaus, including the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Reclamation, to conduct a review and to identify properties to be removed or altered.

In the months following the issuance of SO 3431, public reporting has indicated a widespread effort, particularly within the National Park Service, to eliminate references to topics which, in the view of the Department, may portray aspects of American history in a negative light. Without a doubt, there are episodes throughout American history which we are not and should not ever be proud of. However, the Department bears a responsibility as a steward of historical places and resources, to ensure that every visitor to any unit of our National Park System has access to a complete, unbiased, and historically accurate accounting of our nation's history.

Whitewashed history is not history, it is fiction, and misleading fiction at that. It's not pleasant to recount that Theodore Roosevelt's visit to the Dakotas was occasioned by the fact that he lost both his wife and his mother on the same day, but to tell his story omitting that disturbing fact would miss a seminal moment in this great leader's life.

By the same token, removing references to slavery—the dominant reality for the first third of our nation's history and the proximate cause of the most cataclysmic event in that history—is a gross

violation of one of the National Park Service's core missions—to educate our citizens and illuminate the pivotal events that have made us who we are.

We have a grand history with many crowning achievements, but we have also had dark turns, as well—slavery, Jim Crow and the treatment of our Native Americans certainly among them. If we don't recognize and acknowledge our mistakes, the danger of repeating them—or some variation thereof—is greatly magnified.

Several years ago, I was passing through the Frankfurt airport in Germany and struck up a conversation with one of the airport officials. In that conversation, I learned that it was compulsory in his high school to visit one of the World War II death camps, certainly a jarring and unpleasant experience, but one which educated him about the horrors that had been perpetrated in his country. Contrast this with the deliberate policy of deleting and minimizing the disturbing moments in our history and you can understand why I find this policy so offensive.

As vice chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's subcommittee on the National Park Service, it is my prerogative and my responsibility to conduct oversight of the National Park Service. As such, I respectfully request your response, in writing, to the following questions no later than February 27, 2026.

1. Please describe, in detail, the process by which the Department has executed the review and removal or alterations of properties as directed by SO 3431, taking care to specifically answer each of the following questions in your response;
  - a. Is there a specific office within the Department responsible for identifying properties to be evaluated for alteration or removal pursuant to SO 3431?
  - b. Are subject matter experts, including scientists and historians, consulted as part of the review of each property identified for possible alteration or removal?
  - c. What is the scope of tribal consultation as part of SO 3431 reviews?
  - d. Where, within each of the land management Bureaus, is the final approval to remove or alter a proposed property given?
  - e. Does the Department have a centralized record-keeping system to identify all properties which have been altered or removed pursuant to SO 3431?
  - f. Has the Department taken efforts to preserve any physical property, record, or resource altered or removed pursuant to SO 3431? Where and how are these properties, records, or resources being stored?
2. Does the Department have a list of all properties, within the National Park System, which have been determined to be “non-compliant” with SO 3431?
  - a. If yes, please provide that complete list to the authors of this letter.
3. Does the Department have a list of new signage, displays, or other properties created for the purpose of replacing properties identified for removal as part of the SO 3431 review?

- a. If yes, please provide a detailed list of all new signs, displays, or other properties created for the purpose of replacing properties removed pursuant to SO 3431, including the associated cost for each new article.
4. Does the Department contest the factual accuracy of any monuments, memorials, statues, markers, or similar property which was modified or removed subject to S.O. 3431?
  - a. If so, please provide a comprehensive list, indicating which monuments, memorials, statues, markers, or similar properties were removed subject to S.O. 3431, and clearly explaining the factual inaccuracy which was identified in each case.
  - b. If not, please provide a justification as to why a property identified as historically accurate was subject to modification or removal for each case.

Sincerely,

  
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Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator