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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1501**

**Testimony of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton**  
**House Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands**  
**Hearing on H.R. 4135, a Bill to Remove the Statue of Confederate General Albert Pike**  
**July 21, 2020**

Thank you, Chair Haaland, for holding this hearing and for allowing me to testify on my bill to permanently remove the statue of Confederate General Albert Pike from federal land near Judiciary Square in the nation's capital. This statue was authorized, not by the District of Columbia, but by Congress, in 1898, when the District had no home-rule authority. The statue was constructed using both federal and private funds. The Freemasons, of which Pike was a member, donated the majority of the money needed to build and install the statue in 1901. The Freemasons themselves support the statue's removal, given its divisive nature.

Although the statue was taken down last month during a demonstration, President Trump reportedly has called for the statue to be put back up. I believe Confederate statues should be placed in museums, as valuable historical artifacts when combined with the story of their meaning in our history. Pike was a Confederate general who served dishonorably and was forced to resign in disgrace. It was found that soldiers under his command mutilated the bodies of Union soldiers, and Pike was ultimately imprisoned after his fellow officers reported that he misappropriated funds. Adding to the dishonor of taking up arms against the United States, Pike dishonored even his Confederate military service. He certainly has no claim to be memorialized in the nation's capital. Even those who do not want Confederate statues removed would have to justify awarding Pike any honor, considering his history.

After meeting with the Freemasons in 2017, I decided that the best course of action would be to remove the statue and find a more appropriate place for it. Though my bill does not explicitly say where the statue should be placed, I believe that relocating this statue to a museum and adding historical context would be the most appropriate option. The D.C. Mayor and the D.C. Council also support the removal of the statue. In 2017, the D.C. Council unanimously passed a resolution calling on Congress to remove the statue.

Later in this hearing, you will hear testimony from Dr. Frank Smith, Director of the African American Civil War Museum, a tireless advocate for the 209,145 Black Americans who fought for freedom as members of the United States Colored Troops. These brave men fought against the Confederacy and General Albert Pike to end slavery and keep the United States under one flag.

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Chair Haaland, I appreciate this hearing, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.