

Wilmington, Delaware
April 15, 2021

#0050

Sponsor:

**Council
President
Congo**

Co-Sponsors:

**Council
Members
Darby
Gray**

WHEREAS, the City of Wilmington removed statues of Caesar Rodney and Christopher Columbus in June 2020, citing concerns over damage to the statues as well as intentions to have “an overdue discussion about the public display of historical figures and events,” according to Mayor Mike Purzycki; and

WHEREAS, as of September 2020, over 30 other statues of Christopher Columbus were removed nationwide, either by force or through government intervention, in direct action against the memorials to a figure responsible for enslavement and genocide in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, this legacy of slavery is equally representative in monuments dedicated to individual slave owners, including Caesar Rodney; and

WHEREAS, as of May 2020, 59 Confederate symbols had been removed, relocated from public spaces, or renamed since George Floyd’s death (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2020); and

WHEREAS, these actions have been a symbolic and historic reckoning with the United States’ past; and

WHEREAS, outcry for both the protection and removal of these statues occurred nationally following the unjust murder of George Floyd, in a moment historian Manisha Sinha described in 2020 to NPR as, “ordinary American citizens... finally realizing what these

statues symbolize and how they have been a standing affront for African Americans and their quest for equal citizenship in this country;” and

WHEREAS, the historical contributions of both Christopher Columbus and Caesar Rodney are taught in history courses, in tangent with discussions of other aspects of their lives, to provide context, clarity, and nuance that cannot be provided through a statue; and

WHEREAS, erecting and displaying memorials to individuals who made contributions to the development of our nation simultaneously celebrates the historical atrocities against marginalized communities in the eyes of those marginalized residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON recommends the Administration not reinstall the previously removed Caesar Rodney and Christopher Columbus statues.

Passed by City Council,

Attest: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: The Wilmington City Council strongly urges the Administration not to reinstall the statues of Caesar Rodney and Christopher Columbus previously removed out of concern for their value to the City. Considerations should be made for what these statues represent in history, and to marginalized community members.