



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 9, 2015

## South Carolina House Votes to Remove Confederate Flag

On Thursday, the South Carolina House approved the Senate bill to take down the Confederate flag from the South Carolina Confederate Monument (shown) at the State Capitol, marking a significant reversal in the state's stance on the flag. According to Fox News, the decision followed 13 hours of "contentious debate," wherein opponents of removing the flag declared that the flag had been "hijacked" by racists.



Calls to remove the flag from the state's capitol came after the tragic shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, that claimed the lives of nine church members. The shooter, Dylan Roof, claimed that he was driven to kill because blacks were raping white women and taking over the country. Roof, who had taken photographs of himself holding the Confederate flag and also burning the American flag, stated that he was interested in starting a state war.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley reversed her stance on the flag and led the charge against the flag's presence at the capitol after the shooting. The decision to remove the flag from South Carolina's capitol rested with the General Assembly, whose session ended on June 4, but came back into session under a "sine die" resolution to debate the removal of the flag. Early Thursday, the South Carolina House approved the Senate bill by a vote of 94-20. The bill now heads to Haley's desk for signature.

"Today, as the Senate did before them, the House of Representatives has served the state of South Carolina and her people with great dignity," Haley said in a statement early Thursday. "I'm grateful for their service and their compassion. It is a new day in South Carolina, a day where we can all be proud of, a day that truly brings us all together as we continue to heal, as one people and one state."

Despite some of the newfound support for removing the flag, however, others maintained that the flag should not be demonized simply because of a select few people who use it to advance their hateful agendas. Others continue to regard the flag as a Southern symbol that celebrates states' rights and honors the lives of those who died in battle, not an emblem of racism.

Ben Jones, for example, the chief of heritage operations for the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and a former Democratic U.S. congressman from Georgia, said the flag is flown throughout Southern culture to "mean the spirit of the South — the independen[ce], the rebelliousness of the South. Symbols mean different things to different people in different contexts. When you ask me what it symbolizes, it symbolizes, in a personal way, the courage and the valor of my ancestors, who in their time did what they believed was the right thing to do."

State Senator Glenn F. McConnell (R-Charleston) acknowledged that the Confederate flag has become the symbol of "hate groups," as other symbols have: "It has been misused now really by two groups — one the NAACP trying to make it a symbol of racism and of course the Ku Klux Klan, which has no right to the flag, trying to carry it. But they [the Klan] take other symbols like the American flag and the Christian cross ... we cannot allow them to take this [Confederate] flag for eternity and turn it into



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something the people who carried it never intended it to be.”

Despite how some may view the Confederate flag, *The New American's* Warren Mass noted that the Confederate flag cannot be “studied in a vacuum.” He wrote:

What was the Confederate battle flag intended to be? To start with, there were several flags used by the Confederate States of America. A proper interpretation of their intended symbolism would require a thorough understanding not only of the four years of the Confederacy, but of the preceding 74 years of the American Republic. Indeed, no explanation outside the context of the history of Western Christian civilization would suffice.

Mike Rowe, TV personality and host of CNN's *Somebody's Gotta Dot It*, gave a surprisingly detailed and thought-provoking response when asked by a fan how he felt in regard to the Confederate flag. While Rowe admitted to feeling “angry” when he saw the flag, and even equating it with groups like the Ku Klux Klan, he added that how he *felt* about the flag was far different than what he *thought* about the flag. He continued,

I think we need to be very careful about congratulating ourselves too enthusiastically for removing a piece of cloth from the public square — even if its removal is long overdue. I also think we need to stop calling people racist, just because they see the flag as something other than a symbol of hate. This is what happens when we put a premium on our feelings. We assume everyone who disagrees with us is not merely wrong, but dangerous.

I know many good Southerners who abhor racism, but view this flag as an important connection to their ancestors — the vast majority of whom never owned slaves. This doesn't mean the flag should be allowed to fly on public property — not for a minute. But it's a mistake in my view, to equate the removal of a symbol, with the removal of the evil it's come to symbolize. And that's exactly what a lot of people are doing. We're conflating cause and effect.

For many, removing the Confederate flag from the State Capitol is just the first step and some have argued for it to be ultimately scrubbed from public view and virtually erased from history and memory. Others have since turned their attention to Civil War monuments. But erasing the past simply because it may be offensive to some who perceive it that way is nothing more than historical revision, which is something that should be wholly unsupported.

Unfortunately, the debate over the Confederate flag has further led to the demonization of the South. Conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh has said the South has always been on the Left's radar because it has, over the last few decades, been a “Republican electoral stronghold” in presidential politics.

Northern historian Matthew Guterl of Brown University in Rhode Island noted that the South is being used as a racial scapegoat. “This idea that the South is this backwards, Medieval landscape, and racially terrible — all of that stuff is complete hogwash,” he observed, adding that targeting the South is “political.” Couldn't the Left's perspective on the South be attributed to racism, the very evil that it claims to be fighting?

Fox News reports that the Confederate flag will come down from the Confederate Monument either Thursday or Friday, though the timing is not yet known.



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