



An Act Creating and Promoting a Petition to Rename Francis Scott Key Hall
S 21-04-21 A

1. **WHEREAS**, the Student Government Association (SGA) represents the student body at the University of Maryland; and,
2. **WHEREAS**, the SGA has made a commitment to supporting the betterment of students at the University of Maryland of College Park (UMCP); and,
3. **WHEREAS**, the SGA Diversity and Inclusion Committee aims to promote awareness within the campus community and champion initiatives that promote equality and equity for all students; and,
4. **WHEREAS**, universities across the country, such as: Princeton University, University of Southern California, Wellesley College, Queens University, Clemson University, Western Carolina University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, have changed the name of academic buildings named after racists, in order to condemn their racist ideologies and/or actions ([Addendum D](#)); and
5. **WHEREAS**, other Big Ten institutions, such as the University of Michigan, removed the names of several campus facilities after it was shown that their namesakes' legacies violated the standards and values of the university ([Addendum E](#)); and,
6. **WHEREAS**, the University Systems of Maryland updated its policies to include the "Removal of Name from a Facility" due to "Controversial or Changed Circumstances" ([Addendum A](#)); and,
7. **WHEREAS**, President Loh's moratorium on changing building names that recognize historical figures ended in 2020 ([Addendum C](#)); and,
8. **WHEREAS**, Francis Scott Key "violates the standards or values of the USM" by being a prominent and founding member of the American Colonization Society, and owning enslaved people on Maryland plantations([Addendum A](#), [Addendum B](#)); and,

9. **WHEREAS**, Francis Scott Key systematically fought the inclusion of African-Americans into American society by using his power as District Attorney to crack down on the free speech of abolitionists, defend slavery, prosecute people for owning abolitionist pamphlets ([Addendum B](#), [Addendum F](#)); and,
10. **WHEREAS**, Francis Scott Key argued in court that the property rights of men to own slaves outweighed the free speech rights of abolitionists ([Addendum B](#)); and,
11. **WHEREAS**, Francis Scott Key was a founding member of the American Colonization Society, which sought to ship freed slaves to Africa ([Addendum B](#)); and,
12. **WHEREAS**, Francis Scott Key made no contribution to the UMCP community as it was founded 13 years after his death; and,
13. **WHEREAS**, the main reason Francis Scott Key was honored with a building name was simply because he was a Maryland native and wrote the ‘Star-Spangled Banner’; and,
14. **WHEREAS**, the original ‘Star-Spangled Banner’ included controversial lyrics referring to slaves: *“No refuge could save the hireling and slave. From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave, And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave. O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.”*, ([Addendum F](#)); and,
15. **WHEREAS**, a proposal is to be written to guidelines set by the new policy in favor of the removal of his name from the Francis Scott Key building and,
16. **WHEREAS**, the new policy requires this proposal to show substantial support from the University of Maryland community, including faculty, staff, and students ([Addendum A](#)); and,
17. **WHEREAS**, the new policy requires this proposal to show that the name undermines the ability of individuals to feel a sense of belonging at the University of Maryland ([Addendum A](#)); and,
18. **THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED**, that a petition be created to gather signatures from any individuals in the University of Maryland community that support the renaming of Francis Scott Key Hall; and,
19. **BE IT FURTHER ENACTED**, that this petition be promoted on all SGA social media accounts, sent to listservs, and posted on the SGA website.

Sponsor: Peter Marston (CMNS Representative)

Co-Sponsor:

Committee: Primary: Communications (8-0-2) Secondary: Student Affairs (4-0-3)

Vote: In Favor 22 Opposed 0 Abstentions 1

Therefore, the bill: PASSES FAILS

Kislay Parashar

Speaker of the Legislature



Dan Alpert

Student Body President

Action Plan:

1. Create a petition that verifies people are a part of the UMD community
2. Distribute the petition to as many clubs and individuals at UMD as possible
3. Promote the petition on all public channel

Supplemental Material:

Addendum A: <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVI/VI400.pdf>

Addendum B:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/wheres-debate-francis-scott-keys-slave-holding-legacy-180959550/>

Addendum C: <https://dbknews.com/0999/12/31/arc-pfhweco6rfc2dewaaypvyopxau/>

Addendum D:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/06/campuses-remove-monuments-and-building-names-legacies-racism>

Addendum E:

<https://record.umich.edu/articles/u-m-remove-little-winchell-names-campus-facilities/>

Addendum F:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/10/18/star-spangled-banner-racist-national-anthem/>