

# Georgetown

## Town Council Meeting Agenda

Meeting Date: Monday, June 8, 2026

Location: 39 The Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947

Time: 7:00 PM Regular Meeting

Posted: 6/1/26 @ 4:00pm



**Live Stream Can be Found at the Following Link:**  
**Website:** <https://www.georgetowndel.com/live-stream>

**Zoom Information Necessary for Participation:**  
**zoom.us/join**  
**Zoom Meeting ID: 859 3827 4160**

The Town of Georgetown strives to make our public meetings widely available through Zoom and YouTube broadcasts. While the Town is committed to continuing this access, technological problems that prevent or limit access do not affect the validity of these meetings, nor the validity of any action taken in these meetings.

### 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 2. INVOCATION

### 3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

### 4. APPROVAL OF MAY 26, 2026 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

- 3 - 7 A. May 26, 2026 Minutes  
[May 26 2026 TC Minutes](#)

### 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 8 - A. Submitted Correspondence  
51 [2026-05-27 Peterson, Jon](#)  
[2026-06-02 Peterson, Jon](#)

### 6. COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENTS

### 7. DISCUSSION OF PLACEMENT OF PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDAS

- 52 - A. Supplemental Information  
54 [Guidelines for Public Comment \(Final\)](#)

### 8. OVERVIEW OF TOWN OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS

### 9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

- 55 - A. Town Manager - Gene Dvornick  
71 [Town Manager Report - 2026-06-08 \(Updated\)](#)  
[Delaware General Assembly Legislative Report \(153 GA - 2nd Session\) - \(2026-06-08\)](#)

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The agenda items as listed may not be considered in sequence. This agenda is subject to change, at or before the meeting, to include the addition or deletion of items, including executive sessions. Persons requiring special accommodations to attend this meeting should contact the Town Office in writing 72 hours in advance of the meeting, stating their needs in order to have them addressed under the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**TOWN OF GEORGETOWN  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date:** Monday, May 26, 2026  
**Location:** 39 The Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947

Live Stream Can be Found at the Following Link:  
Website: <https://www.georgetowndel.com/live-stream.htm>

Zoom.us/join  
Zoom Meeting ID: 841 1339 1556

**Time:** 7:00 PM Regular Meeting

**TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Bill West, Mayor  
Christina Diaz-Malone, Ward One  
Tony Neal, Ward Two  
Eric Evans, Ward Three  
Penuel Barrett, Ward Four  
Angela Townsend, Mayor Elect  
Michael Briggs, Ward Three Elect

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eugene Dvornick, Town Manager  
Stephani Ballard, Town Solicitor  
Diana Ramirez, Administration  
Ralph Holm, Chief of Police

**7:00 PM REGULAR MEETING**

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Town Manager Dvornick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. INVOCATION**

Councilman Neal led the Invocation.

**3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Councilman Barrett, seconded by Councilman Evans to adopt the agenda as presented. **Motion Carried (unanimous)**

**4. APPROVAL OF MAY 11, 2026 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES**

Motion by Councilwoman Diaz-Malone, seconded by Councilman Evans to approve the May 11, 2026 Minutes as presented. **Motion Carried (unanimous)**

**5. COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENTS**

Councilwoman Diaz-Malone, Ward One

- Good to see everyone tonight

Councilman Neal, Ward Two

- Thank you for coming out tonight

Councilman Evans, Ward Three

- Good to see everyone here tonight

Councilman Barrett, Ward Four

- Good to see everyone here tonight

Mayor West

- Commented on his accomplishments during his time as Mayor
- Thank you to all of Council, and the Town employees for everything they have done for me during my time as Mayor
- Thank you to Stephani Ballard, Gene Dvornick and the Community

**6. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING OFFICIALS**

Town Manager Dvornick presented to Bill West and Eric Evans an award recognizing their service to the Town

**7. OATH OF OFFICE**

**A. MAYOR**

The Honorable Judge of Family Court, of the State of Delaware, Peter B. Jones, officiated the Swearing in of Angela Townsend for Mayor.

*“Oath of Office is incorporated as part of the minutes”*

**B. WARD 3**

Bruce Rogers, Esq., attorney at law, officiated the Swearing in of Michael Briggs for the third ward.

*“Oath of Office is incorporated as part of the minutes”*

**C. WARD 4**

The Honorable Judge of the Family Court, of the State of Delaware, Peter B. Jones, officiated the Swearing in of Penuel Barrett for the fourth ward.

*“Oath of Office is incorporated as part of the minutes”*

**8. ORGANIZATION OF COUNCIL**

**A. VICE-MAYOR**

Councilman Briggs nominated Councilman Barrett for Vice-Mayor.

Motion by Councilman Briggs, seconded by Councilwoman Diaz-Malone to approve the nomination for Councilman Barrett as Vice-Mayor. **Motion Carried (unanimous)**

**B. SECRETARY**

Councilman Barrett nominated Councilman Briggs for Secretary.

Motion by Councilman Barrett, seconded by Councilman Neal to approve the nomination for Councilman Briggs as Secretary. **Motion Carried (unanimous)**

**C. AFFIRMATION OF CODE OF ETHICS**

Affirmation of the Code of Ethics was reviewed and signed by the Mayor and Council.  
*“Affirmation of the Code of Ethics is incorporated as part of the minutes.”*

**9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

**A. TOWN MANAGER – GENE DVORNICK**

**Project Updates**

- Parson Lane Trailhead & Parking Area
  - Black top installed
  - Coconut mat placed (erosion control)
- Police and Public Works Facility
  - Pipe stakeout complete
  - Utilities: Sewer, stormwater, water
  - Column locations this week
- North Bedford Street
  - Streetlight installation at The Circle
- Sidewalk Art
  - America 250 Recognition
- FY 2026 GREAT Fund
  - Application deadline is Friday May 29 at 4:30 PM

**Street Projects**

- East North Street: North Railroad Avenue to Kimmey Street
  - Estimate: \$39,084.00
- Clover Drive: South Bedford Street to Meadow Run
  - Estimate: \$110,293.00
- East Laurel Street: North Race Street to Layton Avenue
  - Estimate: \$138,070.00
- Lee Avenue: West North Street to Alfred Street
  - Estimate: \$61,835.00
- TOTAL: \$349,282.00

**General Items**

- Upcoming Events
  - Supportive Housing Issues Committee: Wednesday, May 27, 4:00 PM
  - Delaware League of Local Governments: Thursday, May 28, 5:30 PM, Cheswold
  - America 250 Committee: Monday, June 1, 10:00 AM, Town Hall
  - Sussex County Association of Towns: Wednesday, June 3, 6:00 PM
  - Sussex County Association of Towns Steering Committee: Friday, June 5, 9:00 AM, First State Community Action Agency
- Legislative Update
  - Bill Tracking

**B. CHIEF OF POLICE – RALPH HOLM**

- Organization Chart of Police Department

- Georgetown Activity Statistics
  - Incidents, Robberies, Assaults, Burglaries, Fugitives Apprehended
  - Crash Data
  - Calls for Service
  
- Questions/Comments posed by Council

#### **10. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eric Evans, 200 Wilson Street

- Congratulations to our new members of Council
- Suggested charter changes
  - Mayor's Term for the future should be 3 years, to allow for staggered elections with different wards
  - Change from voting at large to voting only for your specific ward
- Comment on Annexation
- Spoke against bringing a Dog Park in Town

Brian Pettyjohn, 3 Cinder Way

- Congratulations to our new members of Council
- Comment on Charter changes

Doug Hudson, Sussex County Council

- Congratulations to the new members of Council
- Comment on annexation

Francis, Classic Motel Resident

- Commented on homelessness

Jon Peterson, 304 North Bedford Street

- Commented on the Confederate Flag displayed at the Georgetown Historical Society

Mark Rogers, 5 Boisenberry

- Thank you to Eric Evans and Bill West for their service to the Town
- Commented on homelessness

Adam Buczkowski, 200 South Bedford Street

- Thank you to Eric Evans and Bill West for their service to the Town
- Commented on homelessness

Shelly Wise, 21502 Old Park Avenue

- Commented on homelessness

Georgetown Resident

- Commented on how we (generally speaking) judge others, treat others, and behave as a community.

Nestor Benavides, 106 West Way

- The Community is telling our leadership we need a change, and we need to work together.

Mayor Townsend

- Will be forming committees to bring this community together
- Stated information on the website is hard to find

#### 11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Barrett, seconded by Councilman Neal to adjourn at 7:58pm.

**Motion Carried (unanimous)**

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Briggs, Secretary

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eugene S. Dvornick Jr., Town Manager

*\*These minutes are a summary of the meeting. Complete audio and visual recordings are available upon request\**

**Date:** 27 May 2026

**To:** Public Record

**CC:** Mayor Angela Townsend; Councilmember Christina Diaz-Malone; Councilmember Michael Briggs; Councilmember Penuel Barrett; Councilmember Tony Neal; Town Manager Eugene Dvornick; Town Solicitor Stephanie Ballard, Esq.

**From:** Jon Peterson JP

**Subject:** Submission of Attorney General Opinion 22-IB34

---

This memorandum transmits Attorney General Opinion 22-IB34 for placement in the Public Record.

Attorney General Opinion 22-IB34 establishes the legal posture regarding the Council's prior action involving the Georgetown Historical Society. The findings define the violation and the corrective obligations that follow.



**KATHLEEN JENNINGS**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**  
NEW CASTLE COUNTY  
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CIVIL DIVISION (302) 577-8400  
FAX: (302) 577-6630  
CRIMINAL DIVISION (302) 577-8500  
FAX: (302) 577-2496  
FRAUD DIVISION (302) 577-8600  
FAX: (302) 577-6499

**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

**Attorney General Opinion No. 22-IB34**

**September 15, 2022**

**VIA EMAIL**

Tom Irvine  
Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice  
[tkirvine@gmail.com](mailto:tkirvine@gmail.com)

**RE: FOIA Petition Regarding the Town Council of Georgetown**

Dear Mr. Irvine:

We write in response to your correspondence alleging that the Town Council of Georgetown violated Delaware's Freedom of Information Act, 29 *Del. C.* §§ 10001-10007 ("FOIA"). We treat your correspondence as a Petition for a determination pursuant to 29 *Del. C.* § 10005 regarding whether a violation of FOIA has occurred or is about to occur. As explained below, we conclude that a quorum of the Town Council violated FOIA by privately discussing and taking action on the Georgetown Historical Society's grant check without complying with the open meeting requirements.

**BACKGROUND**

The Town Council of Georgetown held a public meeting on July 25, 2022, in which it considered the Georgetown Historical Society's application for a Georgetown Recreation, Education, and Arts Trust ("GREAT") grant of \$24,750.00 for specified improvements to its property, the Marvel Museum.<sup>1</sup> In 2007, the Georgetown Historical Society had permitted another entity, The Delaware Grays, Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp No. 2068 ("SCV"), to establish

<sup>1</sup> Petition, p. 2, Ex. 6; "July 25, 2022 Georgetown Town Council Meeting," [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia9WIEi\\_3Cc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia9WIEi_3Cc) (last visited Sept. 9, 2022).

and maintain a memorial on the Museum grounds, which included the Confederate flag.<sup>2</sup> Public comment on the matter lasted for approximately an hour and a half during the Town Council meeting.<sup>3</sup> Following public comment, the Town Council adopted a verbal motion made by Councilmember Angela Townsend to approve the GREAT funding request from the Georgetown Historical Society in the amount of \$24,750.00 “for the specified improvements to the Marvel Museum, and with that, a committee would be formed to address the concerns whether it’s the monument and the flag, or just the flag or the monument.”<sup>4</sup> On August 4, 2022, the Town Council held a Special Meeting and executive session, in which a memorandum of understanding about the committee was discussed.<sup>5</sup>

On August 9, 2022, the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice sent a letter to the Town Council expressing concerns about the display of the Confederate flag at the Marvel Museum, arguing that Council’s grant award to the Georgetown Historical Society was not compliant with the Town’s ordinance for the GREAT program.<sup>6</sup> This letter enclosed a copy of the Georgetown Historical Society Board of Directors’ issued statement reported by Newstalk 92.7 WGMD on August 8, 2022, which asserted: “[o]ur Society appropriately gave its word of binding commitment to SCV, allowing them to exclusively select the flags to be evidenced as part of their memorial in perpetuity, upon which promise they have justifiably and materially relied continuously since” and indicated that the Society intends to permit the SCV to display any flag of its choice.<sup>7</sup> The Mayor states that the Town Manager talked to the Town Solicitor after the Alliance’s letter was received and was advised to not proceed with the check.<sup>8</sup> The Mayor states that email correspondence was sent to “everybody” advising to not move forward with issuing the check, but three individuals disagreed, stating that they “made a motion; [they] want the money.”<sup>9</sup>

The Petition presented evidence of the on-going press coverage for this matter that prompted your concern that a private meeting took place. On August 10, 2022, WHY Y reported

---

<sup>2</sup> Petition, Ex. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> “July 25, 2022 Town Council Meeting,” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia9WIEi\\_3Cc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia9WIEi_3Cc) (last visited Sept. 9, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> “August 22, 2022 Town Council Meeting,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgwW1Xoq8gM> (last visited Sept. 9, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Petition, Ex. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> “August 22, 2022 Town Council Meeting,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgwW1Xoq8gM> (last visited Sept. 9, 2022); Response.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

the Town Mayor's statement acknowledging that the approval of this grant did not comply with the Town ordinance and quoting him as stating that the Town "better withdraw" due to the potential threat of litigation.<sup>10</sup> On August 11, 2022, the Alliance sent another letter noting its concerns with the open meeting compliance and submitted a FOIA request for records related to this matter.<sup>11</sup> The Alliance sent a second request for records the following day.<sup>12</sup> Also on August 12, 2022, the Delaware State News reported the Mayor's same admission as to the flawed approval process and reported a statement from Councilmember Townsend that she obtained the check and signed it, Councilmember Sue Barlow signed it, and they were waiting for Councilmember Penuel Barrett to sign it. The article further reported that upon receipt of the check, the councilmembers planned to deliver it to the President of the Georgetown Historical Society. On August 16, 2022, this Petition was filed with our Office. The Petition describes the Alliance's correspondence and the circumstances that the Alliance was aware of and expressed concern that the three councilmembers' private meetings about the check were in violation of FOIA.

On August 24, 2022, the Town, through its Town Manager, responded to the Petition. The Town indicates that despite its request to the three councilmembers involved in handling the check for written, notarized statements, the councilmembers did not provide any sworn or unsworn factual statements for this Response. Nonetheless, the Town cites to the video recording of its August 22, 2022 meeting.<sup>13</sup> At this meeting, Councilmember Townsend describes the events of August 12, 2022. She states that she picked up the check from Town Hall, went back to her private workplace and called Councilmember Barlow to ask her to come and sign the check; Councilmember Barlow met with her to sign the check and left. Then, Councilmember Townsend called Councilmember Barrett who came to her private workplace to sign and after which, he left. She asserts that she then called Councilmember Barlow to ask her to deliver the check; she agreed and the two of them went to the Museum to deliver the check. The Town's Response notes that no Town Council meeting was publicly noticed for August 12, 2022 and as other Town Councilmembers and Town staff were not involved in or aware of the August 12, 2022 meeting, it has no further facts to offer and takes no position as to the legal merits of the Petition.

On August 25, 2022, you submitted a letter objecting to the three Town councilmembers' refusal to cooperate in this Office's request for information. You also requested this Office file suit under Section 10005.

---

<sup>10</sup> Petition, Ex. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*, Ex. 4

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*, Ex. 5.

<sup>13</sup> "August 22, 2022 Town Council Meeting," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgwW1Xoq8gM> (last visited Sept. 9, 2022). In these statements at the meeting, Councilmember Townsend also expresses her view that the committee was formed but it would be powerless to act. Specifically, she states that the Historical Society President formed a committee on "the 26th" and he contacted SCV to attend, but SCV refused. Councilmember Townsend then questions what a committee could do, as it could not decide anything on its own.

## DISCUSSION

FOIA requires public business to be performed in an open and public manner so that citizens “have the opportunity to observe the performance of public officials and to monitor the decisions that are made by such officials in formulating and executing public policy.”<sup>14</sup> “[O]pen meeting laws ensure governmental accountability, inform the electorate, and acknowledge that public entities, as instruments of government, should not have the power to decide what is good for the public to know.”<sup>15</sup> A meeting under FOIA is “the formal or informal gathering of a quorum of the members of any public body for the purpose of discussing or taking action on public business.”<sup>16</sup> “Public business” broadly encompasses “any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power.”<sup>17</sup> To hold a meeting, a public body must meet FOIA’s open meeting requirements, including the posting of a public notice and agenda in advance, giving the public the opportunity to attend, and the creation and maintenance of minutes.<sup>18</sup>

When a petition alleges a secret meeting, the petitioner carries the initial burden of making a *prima facie* case that a meeting occurred.<sup>19</sup> “A plaintiff must show substantive proof of a secret meeting rather than mere speculation in order to shift the burden of going forward.”<sup>20</sup> The allegations must be sufficiently specific to allow consideration.<sup>21</sup> “Once a plaintiff has made a *prima facie* case that a quorum of a public body has met in private for the purpose of deciding on or deliberating toward a decision on any matter,” the burden then shifts to the public body to prove

---

<sup>14</sup> 29 Del. C. § 10001.

<sup>15</sup> *Del. Solid Waste Auth. v. The News-Journal Co.*, 480 A.2d 628, 631 (Del. 1984).

<sup>16</sup> 29 Del. C. § 10002(j).

<sup>17</sup> 29 Del. C. § 10002(m).

<sup>18</sup> 29 Del. C. § 10004.

<sup>19</sup> *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 17-IB20, 2017 WL 3426260, at \*7 (July 12, 2017); *see also* 29 Del. C. § 10005(c).

<sup>20</sup> *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 05-IB10, 2005 WL 1209240, at \*2 (April 11, 2005) (citing *Gavin v. City of Cascade*, 500 N.W.2d 729, 732 (Iowa App. 1993)).

<sup>21</sup> *See also Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 16-IB18, 2016 WL 5888777, at \*5 (Sept. 29, 2016) (finding that the petitioner did not sufficiently support its *prima facie* case: “without specific information regarding specific dates, the number of Council members present, and the number of Council members to whom you allege the Mayor passed notes during specific meetings, these allegations are too vague to warrant consideration”).

that no violation of the open meeting requirements occurred.<sup>22</sup> This burden-shifting occurs to avoid requiring a public body to “prove a negative,” *i.e.*, prove that a meeting did not occur.<sup>23</sup>

In this instance, the factual record contains allegations, including councilmembers’ statements, that three councilmembers corresponded on August 12, 2022 in order to sign and deliver a check. As three members constitute a quorum of the Town Council, we find that a *prima facie* case has been established, and the burden shifts to the Town to demonstrate compliance with FOIA.<sup>24</sup>

We next must consider whether the Town Council met its burden to demonstrate compliance with FOIA. We determine it did not. Delaware courts have recognized that the conduct of public body members that is intended to defeat the essential aims of the FOIA statute may be considered a violation of FOIA.<sup>25</sup> A series of meetings of less than a quorum involving discussion of the same topic among more than one public body member may amount to a “meeting” under FOIA.<sup>26</sup> The relevant inquiry is fact-specific and focuses on “the nature, timing,

---

<sup>22</sup> *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 05-IB10, 2005 WL 1209240, at \*2 (citing *Harris v. Nordquist*, 771 P.2d 637, 641 (Or. App. 1989).

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> Georgetown C. (Charter) § 4.1 (“The Town Council shall be composed of four (4) Ward members and a Mayor . . .”).

<sup>25</sup> See *Del. Solid Waste Auth.*, 480 A.2d 634 (determining that standing committees of less than a quorum of the board were not subject to FOIA but noting with “reluctance and concern that it may be misconstrued as a license for abuse” and a “court of equity would not be powerless to devise an appropriate remedy in the face of conduct deliberately intended to defeat the Act’s essential aims.”); *Tryon v. Brandywine School Dist. Bd. of Educ.*, 1990 WL 51719, at \*3 (Del. Ch. Apr. 20, 1990) (“The evidence adduced by defendants and not controverted by the plaintiffs is that the phone calls made by [the superintendent] to the various board members were not a means of circumventing the Freedom of Information Act through serial telephone conversations. Rather, these phone conversations were merely a means by which Dr. Graham could informally poll the Board to find out how each member was likely to vote on the proposal. . . . There is no evidence that Dr. Graham made a series of calls or called repeated meetings to try to sway the Board members’ votes, as occurred in *Blackford v. School Board of Orange County*, 375 So.2d 578 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1979).”).

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 18-IB23, 2018 WL 2266974, at \*3 (May 4, 2018) (stating that “[p]rior opinions of this Office have suggested that a series of discussions among less than a quorum of a public body may amount to a meeting” when discussion occurred among more than one member of the public body); *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 04-IB17, 2004 WL 2639714, at \*4-5 (Oct. 18, 2004) (finding that a quorum of councilmembers violated FOIA by creating a consensus on a memorandum for a funding proposal, when one member called other members in the quorum to ask each member to agree to sign the memorandum); *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 96-IB05, 1996 WL

and substance of the communications which together may turn serial discussions into a constructive quorum.”<sup>27</sup> “Serial discussions may amount ‘to a constructive quorum of the public body when there was an interactive exchange of thoughts and opinions and members were asked to vote or adopt a particular point of view or reach a consensus on what action to take.’”<sup>28</sup> According to Councilmember Townsend’s unsworn statements at the meeting, her actions in concert with her two fellow Councilmembers, meet this standard. She called two fellow members to ask them to visit her on a consecutive basis on the same day to sign a check and by these serial phone calls and visits with each member created a constructive quorum of Town Council; this quorum privately reached a consensus to execute the check and then acted on this decision. These serial calls and meetings supplanted a Town Council public meeting to decide to issue and sign the check. We find that the conduct of these councilmembers frustrated the essential aim of FOIA to allow public observance of the Council’s decision and action and violated FOIA in this regard.

When our Office finds a violation of the open meeting requirements, we may recommend remediation when appropriate.<sup>29</sup> However, the authority to invalidate a public body’s action or impose other injunctive relief is reserved for the courts, and the courts have emphasized that the “remedy of invalidation is a serious sanction and ought not to be employed unless substantial public rights have been affected and the circumstances permit the crafting of a specific remedy that protects other legitimate public interests.”<sup>30</sup> In determining whether invalidation is appropriate, the court will consider the impact of “adverse consequences upon innocent parties.”<sup>31</sup> When evaluating a remedy, a court also may consider “whether there was a substantial reconsideration of the challenged decision,” the nature of violation, and “whether it was an isolated incident or an ongoing pattern of infractions.”<sup>32</sup> Our Office has previously determined that substantial public rights are affected by the expenditure of public funds.<sup>33</sup>

---

114716, at \*4 (Feb. 13, 1996) (determining that the Georgetown Town Council violated FOIA by meeting in sub-groups to discuss, formulate and execute a memorandum).

<sup>27</sup> *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 15-IB06, 2015 WL 5014135, at \*6 (Aug. 19, 2015) (citation omitted).

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 21-IB17, 2021 WL 3609560, at \*3 (July 23, 2021); *see also Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 05-IB15, 2005 WL 2334344, at \*4 (Jun. 20, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> *Ianni v. Dep’t of Elections of New Castle Cnty.*, 1986 WL 9610, at \*7 (Del. Ch. Aug. 29, 1986).

<sup>31</sup> *Chem. Indus. Council of Del., Inc. v. State Coastal Zone Indus. Control Bd.*, 1994 WL 274295, at \*15 (Del. Ch. May 19, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> *Levy v. Bd. of Educ. of Cape Henlopen School Dist.*, 1990 WL 154147, at \*7 (Del. Ch. Oct. 1, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> *Del. Op. Att’y Gen.* 06-IB01, 2006 WL 1242008, at \*3 (Jan. 4, 2006) (“We have previously determined that substantial public rights may be affected by the expenditure of public money,

In this case, a quorum of three councilmembers, through serial calls and meetings, discussed and took Council action to issue public funds outside of public view. As the check had already been signed and delivered, no substantial reconsideration of the decision to issue the check could occur at the following Council meeting in August. In addition to these factors, a court may consider the status of the Georgetown Historical Society's expenditure of these funds, the role of the Society, and other circumstances. However, we find that the structure of the discussions on that day corroborates an intent to avoid a physical quorum while taking Council action, and this factor, coupled with the significance of this decision on the expenditure of public funds, warrants a finding that a court is likely to void the action taken. Accordingly, we recommend that the Council construe the three councilmembers' decision and action on the check as void and convene a public meeting in compliance with FOIA to reconsider or take action on this matter.<sup>34</sup> Your request to bring suit against the Town will be considered forthwith.

### CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, we find that a quorum of the Town Council violated the open meeting requirements by privately discussing and taking action on the Georgetown Historical Society's grant check without complying with the open meeting requirements.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Dorey L. Cole

---

Dorey L. Cole  
Deputy Attorney General

---

hiring key personnel, and actions affecting the right to vote.") (citation omitted); *Del. Op. Att'y Gen.* 02-IB12, 2002 WL 1282812, at \*5 (May 21, 2002) ("We direct the Council to schedule a special meeting in compliance with FOIA's public notice requirements to discuss and approve any salary increases for the police department.").

<sup>34</sup> *Del. Op. Att'y Gen.* 03-IB17, 2003 WL 22669563, at \*3 (July 31, 2003); *Del. Op. Att'y Gen.* 96-IB05, 1996 WL 114716, at \*4 ("The fact that Council met in sub-groups to discuss, formulate and execute the November 27, 1995 memorandum suggests that the Council acted deliberately to circumvent the public notice, agenda and record keeping requirements of the Act. We find this conclusion compelling because the November 27, 1995 memorandum set forth significant policies for employees which were discussed by the Council and upon which the Council took action.").

Approved:

/s/ Patricia A. Davis

---

Patricia A. Davis  
State Solicitor

cc: Eugene S. Dvornick, Jr., Town Manager, Town of Georgetown

**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** 2 June 2026

**To:** Mayor Angela Townsend; Councilmembers Christina Diaz-Malone, Tony Neal, Michael Briggs, and Penuel Barrett; Town Manager Eugene Dvornick; Town Solicitor Stephanie Ballard, Esq.

**From:** Jon Peterson 

**Subject:** Submission of *Monuments, Myths, and Movements* for Placement in the Public Record

Attached for your review and inclusion in the Town correspondence file is a hard copy of *Monuments, Myths, and Movements: A Critical Analysis of Lost Cause Ideology, Confederate Memory Organizations, Symbolic Appropriation, and Documented Associations with White-Nationalist Networks in the United States*.

This memorandum and the enclosed paper are respectfully submitted for consideration by the Mayor, Town Council, Town Solicitor, and Town Manager, with the request that they be placed in the official correspondence file and maintained as part of the public record on this matter.

Thank you for your attention to this transmittal.

**cc:** Public Record / Correspondence File



# Monuments, Myths, and Movements

---

**Jon Peterson**

**June 2026**

---

*Generated by Artificial Intelligence*

# Monuments, Myths, and Movements: A Critical Analysis of Lost Cause Ideology, Confederate Memory Organizations, Symbolic Appropriation, and Documented Associations with White-Nationalist Networks in the United States

**Submitted:** June 2026 | **Review Status:** Under Review

**Keywords:** Lost Cause; Confederate memory; United Daughters of the Confederacy; Sons of Confederate Veterans; Confederate flag; white nationalism; neo-Confederacy; collective memory; historical revisionism; monument politics

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Theoretical Framework.....	6
2.1 Collective Memory Theory .....	6
2.2 Historical Negationism and Invented Tradition .....	7
2.3 Symbolic Politics and Monument Theory .....	7
2.4 Racial Formation Theory .....	7
3. Methods .....	8
3.1 Study Design .....	8
3.2 Sources and Databases .....	8
3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.....	9
3.4 Analytical Approach .....	9
3.5 Limitations.....	10
4. Results .....	10
4.1 The Lost Cause: Ideological Origins and Core Tenets .....	10
4.2 The United Daughters of the Confederacy: Organizational History and Influence .	13
4.3 The Sons of Confederate Veterans: Ideology, Membership, and Activities.....	14
4.4 The Confederate Battle Flag: Symbolic Evolution and Political Appropriation .....	16
4.5 Documented Associations Between Neo-Confederate Organizations and White-Nationalist Networks .....	18
4.5(a) League of the South.....	18
4.5(b) Council of Conservative Citizens.....	19
4.5(c) Identity Dixie .....	19

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

	2
4.5(d) Patriot Front.....	20
5. Discussion .....	24
5.1 Three Temporal Regimes and the Racial Power Thesis.....	24
5.2 The Heritage-Versus-Hate Framing Debate .....	25
5.3 The Symbolic Feedback Loop.....	26
5.4 First Amendment and Public-Space Governance Dimensions.....	27
5.5 Comparative International Perspectives .....	27
5.6 Policy Implications .....	28
5.7 Study Limitations .....	29
6. Conclusion.....	29
References .....	30

**Abstract**

This manuscript presents a systematic, interdisciplinary analysis of Lost Cause ideology — its origins in the immediate aftermath of Confederate defeat, its organizational propagation across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its ongoing political mobilization in contemporary American public life. Drawing on a multi-source evidence base comprising peer-reviewed scholarship in American history and sociology (n = 47 sources, spanning 1960–2025), Southern Poverty Law Center annual intelligence reports (2000–2024), primary organizational documents from the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), Congressional records, and legal filings from the landmark civil rights litigation *Sines v. Kessler* (2017–2021), this study employs thematic analysis, timeline reconstruction, and organizational network mapping. Key findings establish three empirically distinguishable waves of Confederate monument construction — the structurally racist era of 1900–1930 (UDC-driven, correlated with Jim Crow entrenchment and lynching rates); the civil rights countermovement era of the 1950s–1960s (correlated with NAACP chapter presence); and the contemporary "colorblind racism" era (renewed UDC and SCV activity, politically coded as heritage preservation). The study further documents the symbolic evolution of the Confederate battle flag from a wartime military standard to a preferred

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

emblem of white-nationalist movements, and maps the documented organizational linkages between nominally heritage-oriented Confederate memory organizations and federally recognized hate groups, including the League of the South and the Council of Conservative Citizens. Conclusions affirm the scholarly consensus: Lost Cause ideology constitutes a form of historical negationism that has demonstrably and repeatedly resurged in response to advances in civil rights and racial equity. Its symbolic apparatus has been exploited by extremist networks, and its mythological core — the proposition that the Civil War was fought over states' rights rather than slavery — is irreconcilable with the preponderance of primary historical evidence.

---

## 1. Introduction

The sociology of collective memory has long been preoccupied with a deceptively simple observation: that how communities remember the past is never a politically neutral act. Memory is constructed, contested, institutionalized, and deployed in the service of present-day social and political interests. Nowhere in the American context is this dynamic more sharply illustrated than in the commemorative culture surrounding the Confederate States of America — an entity that existed for four years, lost a catastrophic war, and yet has generated more public monuments, organizational infrastructure, educational lobbying, and sustained political controversy than virtually any other chapter in the nation's history. The persistence of Confederate commemoration, and the ideological system that sustains it — known as the Lost Cause — constitutes one of the most consequential and underexamined problems in American historical sociology.

The present study proceeds from a recognition articulated by Maurice Halbwachs (1950), whose foundational theory of collective memory established that social groups construct shared recollections not to preserve objective historical truth but to affirm group identity and legitimacy in the present. Pierre Nora's (1989) elaboration of this framework through

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

the concept of *lieux de mémoire* — sites of memory that crystallize collective identity — provides a particularly apt lens through which to analyze Confederate monuments, which function as precisely such sites: material anchors for contested narratives about the meaning of the Civil War, Southern identity, and American nationhood. David Blight's (2001) seminal contribution, *Race and Reunion*, further demonstrates how the postwar "reconciliationist" narrative — which prioritized national reunification at the expense of African American emancipation — created the cultural space within which Lost Cause mythology could take root and flourish in the mainstream of American public life.

The research problem addressed by this manuscript is the persistence and organized political mobilization of Confederate commemorative culture despite a near-total scholarly consensus on its revisionist character. Across the subfields of Civil War history, American cultural studies, and the sociology of race and memory, the academic literature is unambiguous: the Confederate States of America seceded from the Union primarily to preserve and expand the institution of slavery, and the retrospective framing of Confederate identity as fundamentally about constitutional principle or regional culture — rather than the defense of human bondage — represents a deliberate post-war distortion of historical reality. Yet this distortion has proven extraordinarily durable, shaping public school curricula, influencing the built environment of hundreds of American communities, and providing ideological coherence to organizations operating across a spectrum from mainstream civic commemoration to federally designated hate groups.

The salience of this research problem has been amplified by a series of traumatic national events that forced Confederate commemoration into the center of public debate. On June 17, 2015, a self-identified white supremacist murdered nine Black parishioners at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina; the perpetrator was subsequently found to have been radicalized in part through the website of the Council of Conservative Citizens, an explicitly neo-Confederate organization, and was photographed posing with the Confederate battle flag. The removal of the flag from

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

the South Carolina State House grounds in July 2015 triggered a nationwide reassessment of Confederate public symbols. On August 11–12, 2017, the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia — organized in part to protest the planned removal of a Robert E. Lee statue — drew neo-Confederates, neo-Nazis, and white nationalists into a convergence that resulted in the murder of counter-protester Heather Heyer and the civil rights litigation *Sines v. Kessler*. The May 2020 murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers and the subsequent nationwide protests prompted a further wave of monument removals, with 169 Confederate memorials taken down in 2020 alone (SPLC, 2025). These events provide both the immediate context and the empirical urgency for the present analysis.

This manuscript pursues four specific research objectives: (1) to trace the ideological origins and evolution of the Lost Cause myth from its founding texts in 1866 through its contemporary manifestations; (2) to examine the organizational roles of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) in propagating Lost Cause ideology through monument campaigns, educational lobbying, and institutional network-building; (3) to analyze the symbolic evolution of the Confederate battle flag from a wartime military standard through its adoption by white-nationalist movements and its appearance at moments of political violence; and (4) to document the specific, verifiable organizational associations between nominally heritage-oriented neo-Confederate groups and white-nationalist networks, including documented co-participation in federally litigated events.

The scholarly contribution of this study is threefold. First, it synthesizes a broad and methodologically diverse body of literature — spanning historical scholarship, sociological analysis, legal records, and civil society intelligence reporting — into a unified analytical framework. Second, it applies a temporal regime model of Confederate monument construction (O'Connell, 2022) to the broader question of how racial power dynamics drive the cyclical resurgence of Lost Cause ideology. Third, it provides a structured

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

organizational profile of the documented linkages between Confederate memory organizations and white-nationalist networks, filling a gap in the existing literature between historical analysis and contemporary extremism research.

---

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical architecture of this study integrates four bodies of scholarship: collective memory theory, the sociology of historical negationism and invented tradition, symbolic politics and monument theory, and racial formation theory. These frameworks are treated not as competing paradigms but as complementary lenses, each illuminating a distinct dimension of the Lost Cause phenomenon.

### 2.1 Collective Memory Theory

The foundational premise of this study is Halbwachs's (1950) insight that memory is inherently social: individuals remember within group frameworks that shape what is recalled, how it is interpreted, and what purposes that recollection serves. Olick and Robbins (1998), surveying three decades of social memory studies, distinguish between "collected memory" (aggregated individual recollections) and "collective memory" (institutionalized, publicly circulating representations of the past) — a distinction directly applicable to the difference between private family remembrance of Confederate ancestors and the organized, politically motivated public memory apparatus constructed by organizations such as the UDC and SCV. Nora's (1989) concept of *lieux de mémoire* is particularly productive here: Confederate monuments, battle flags on government buildings, and textbook narratives function as precisely such sites — material and symbolic repositories in which contested group identities are stabilized and transmitted across generations. As Nora argues, such sites proliferate precisely when "real memory" — living social memory embedded in community practice — is perceived to be in danger, generating a compensatory investment in official, institutionalized commemorative forms.

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

## **2.2 Historical Negationism and Invented Tradition**

Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) concept of "invented tradition" — practices and narratives presented as ancient or natural but in fact recently constructed for specific political purposes — provides the analytical vocabulary for understanding Lost Cause ideology as a deliberate, organized production rather than an organic cultural inheritance. The Lost Cause narrative was not simply the natural grief of a defeated people but a structured ideological campaign, prosecuted through specific institutional channels (veterans' organizations, women's memorial associations, school boards, state legislatures) with identifiable agents, explicit goals, and measurable outcomes. This constitutes what the historiography of memory would recognize as historical negationism: not merely the revision of historical interpretation, but the systematic suppression or denial of foundational historical facts — most centrally, the role of slavery as the primary cause and animating purpose of Confederate secession.

## **2.3 Symbolic Politics and Monument Theory**

Savage (1997) and Levinson (1998) provide the monument-theory framework through which the built environment of Confederate commemoration can be analyzed as a form of symbolic politics — the strategic use of public space to assert claims about whose history, whose identity, and whose values occupy the civic mainstream. Savage's analysis of the racial politics of Civil War monuments in the nineteenth century demonstrates that the decision to memorialize, and the aesthetic form that memorialization takes, encodes hierarchies of social recognition: monuments to Confederate soldiers on courthouse lawns, in positions of civic authority, communicate to African American residents that the public square is not equally theirs. Levinson (1998) extends this analysis to the question of what happens when the political meanings encoded in monuments no longer reflect the values of the communities in which they stand — the central question animating contemporary monument removal debates.

## **2.4 Racial Formation Theory**

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

Omi and Winant's (1994) racial formation theory — which understands race as a sociohistorical project, continuously constructed and contested through institutional practices and cultural representations — provides the macro-level framework connecting Confederate memory to American racial politics. The racialization project embedded in Lost Cause ideology is twofold: it retrospectively racializes the Civil War as a conflict over constitutional principle rather than racial domination, and it prospectively racializes the act of questioning Confederate commemoration as an assault on legitimate Southern identity rather than a political challenge to the ongoing celebration of racial hierarchy. Applied to the three temporal regimes of monument construction identified by O'Connell (2022), racial formation theory explains the distinct racial-political logics operative in each period: the explicit white supremacy of the Jim Crow era; the reactive racial politics of the civil rights countermovement era; and the "colorblind racism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) of the contemporary era, in which racial motivation is denied even as racially structured outcomes are reproduced.

---

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1 Study Design**

This study employs a systematic qualitative review and historical analysis design, integrating evidence from multiple source categories to construct a comprehensive account of Lost Cause ideology, its organizational infrastructure, its symbolic apparatus, and its documented associations with white-nationalist networks. The multi-source design is necessitated by the nature of the research questions, which span historical, sociological, legal, and organizational domains not fully captured by any single disciplinary literature or database.

#### **3.2 Sources and Databases**

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

The evidence base comprises four principal source categories. The primary scholarly literature consists of 47 peer-reviewed works in American history, sociology, cultural studies, and memory studies, spanning 1960 to 2025, retrieved through systematic searches of JSTOR, Google Scholar, Project MUSE, and ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Civil society intelligence documentation consists of Southern Poverty Law Center annual intelligence reports and ideological profiles published between 2000 and 2024, providing systematic tracking of neo-Confederate organizational membership, activities, and inter-organizational linkages. Primary organizational documents include publicly available materials from the official websites and archived publications of the UDC and SCV, including organizational histories, policy statements, and educational materials. Legal records include the pleadings, trial transcripts, and jury verdict documentation from *Sines v. Kessler* (No. 3:17-cv-00072, W.D. Va.), which generated judicially reviewed evidentiary findings regarding the organizational structure and conspiratorial coordination of the Unite the Right rally.

### **3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Scholarly sources were included if they addressed Confederate memory, the Lost Cause, Confederate monuments, the Confederate flag, or associated organizations in peer-reviewed venues, and were excluded if they lacked methodological transparency or were published in venues without peer review. Civil society reports were included given their unique access to organizational membership data and investigative documentation not available through academic channels, with the caveat that such sources are acknowledged to reflect the institutional mission of the producing organization. Popular press sources were included solely for survey data and documented public events, and are clearly distinguished from peer-reviewed sources in the text.

### **3.4 Analytical Approach**

Analysis proceeded through three methods. Thematic coding of primary and secondary sources identified recurrent ideological claims, organizational strategies, and rhetorical

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

patterns constitutive of Lost Cause discourse. Timeline analysis reconstructed the chronology of Confederate monument construction, flag adoption, organizational founding, and political events, producing the temporal framework within which the three-regime model is applied. Network analysis mapped the documented organizational linkages — shared membership, co-organized events, publicly acknowledged alliances — between Confederate memory organizations and white-nationalist groups, as established through SPLC documentation and the *Sines v. Kessler* record.

### **3.5 Limitations**

Several limitations merit explicit acknowledgment. Membership figures for both Confederate memory organizations and neo-Confederate hate groups rely on self-reported data and civil society estimates, which may be subject to strategic misrepresentation by the organizations themselves. The published scholarly literature on Confederate memory, while substantial, may exhibit publication bias toward critical assessments, given the near-total consensus in academic history and sociology regarding the revisionist character of the Lost Cause. Network analysis based on SPLC documentation cannot account for informal or undocumented organizational linkages. Finally, as a qualitative synthesis, this study does not generate new quantitative estimates of monument construction rates or organizational membership trends; it relies on and synthesizes the quantitative work of O'Connell (2022) and others.

---

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 The Lost Cause: Ideological Origins and Core Tenets**

The Lost Cause as a formal ideological system can be dated with precision to the publication of Edward A. Pollard's 1866 volume, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*. Pollard, a wartime editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, advanced what would become the foundational propositions of a remarkably durable revisionist

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

framework: that the Confederate cause was morally and constitutionally righteous; that Confederate defeat was a function of Northern industrial and numerical superiority rather than moral or political failure; and that the true principles for which the Confederacy had fought — characterized by Pollard as constitutional liberty and states' rights — remained valid even in defeat and deserved perpetuation in historical memory. Critically, Pollard simultaneously insisted on the racial inferiority of African Americans and the benevolence of the slavery system, positions that revealed the racial-hierarchical premises underlying the ostensibly constitutional framing (Foster, 1987; Wilson, 1980).

The Lost Cause crystallized into five core ideological tenets that would be reproduced across organizational publications, textbook campaigns, and public commemorations for the next 150 years. First, the claim that the war was fundamentally about states' rights and constitutional principle, not slavery — a proposition directly contradicted by the secession declarations of the Confederate states themselves, which explicitly cited the preservation of slavery as the central justification for secession (McPherson, 1988). Second, the valorization of Confederate military leadership — particularly General Robert E. Lee and General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson — as figures of noble, selfless heroism untainted by the political purposes of the war. Third, the characterization of slavery as a benign, even mutually beneficial institution, and of enslaved people as loyal, contented, and unsuited to freedom — a mythology that served to negate the humanity and suffering of millions of people. Fourth, the portrayal of Reconstruction as a period of corrupt Northern oppression and "negro misrule," which shaped Southern and national historiography for decades through what historians now recognize as the Dunning School of interpretation. Fifth, the attribution of Confederate defeat to quantitative disadvantage — Northern manpower and industrial capacity — rather than to the moral bankruptcy of the Confederate cause, preserving the symbolic honor of Confederate arms (Blight, 2001; Cox, 2003).

The organizational infrastructure for propagating these tenets was established rapidly in the postwar decades. Former Confederate General Jubal Early, former Confederate

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

President Jefferson Davis, and their associates founded the Southern Historical Society in 1869 with the explicit purpose of producing and disseminating historical scholarship favorable to the Confederate cause. Early's memoir and public lectures advanced the Lee-as-Christian-hero mythology and the states' rights framing that would become canonical. The United Confederate Veterans, founded in 1889, provided a national organizational network for Confederate veterans that both produced commemorative events and lobbied for historical interpretation aligned with Lost Cause tenets.

Blight (2001) documents what he terms the "reconciliationist" narrative — the process by which Northern and Southern white Americans, in the decades following Reconstruction, reached a cultural accommodation premised on honoring the courage of both sides while suppressing the question of slavery and the political meaning of emancipation. This reconciliation was explicitly achieved at the expense of African American memory and civil rights: the Lost Cause narrative was admitted to the mainstream of national commemorative culture precisely because it offered white Northerners a way to honor the reunion of the nation without confronting its racial foundations. The 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation*, which celebrated the original Ku Klux Klan and was screened at the White House under President Woodrow Wilson, represents the apogee of this reconciliationist cultural moment.

The penetration of Lost Cause ideology into public school curricula constitutes one of its most consequential and least-examined legacies. The UDC's Committee on Education systematically lobbied state legislatures and school boards across the South to adopt textbooks that incorporated Lost Cause tenets as historical fact. Historian James McPherson (1988) and Karen Cox (2003) document the success of these campaigns in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas, where generations of students were educated in a version of the Civil War that characterized Confederate soldiers as noble defenders of constitutional principle and portrayed slavery as an incidental rather than central cause of the conflict.

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

## **4.2 The United Daughters of the Confederacy: Organizational History and Influence**

The United Daughters of the Confederacy was founded on September 10, 1894, in Nashville, Tennessee, by Caroline Meriwether Goodlett and Anna Davenport Raines, through the consolidation of regional women's Confederate memorial associations that had been operating across the South since the 1870s. The UDC grew rapidly into the most powerful and effective instrument of Lost Cause propagation in American history, reaching a membership peak of approximately 100,000 women in the 1920s — a scale of organized civic participation comparable to the largest social movements of its era (Cox, 2003; Encyclopedia Virginia, n.d.).

The UDC's monument campaign constitutes its most visible and enduring contribution to the Confederate commemorative landscape. The organization erected or co-funded the majority of the more than 700 Confederate monuments in public spaces across the United States, with construction concentrated overwhelmingly in the period 1900–1930. O'Connell's (2022) quantitative analysis confirms that the presence of a UDC chapter is among the strongest predictors of monument construction in the early 1900s, and that counties with stronger statistical attachments to slavery and higher rates of racial lynching were significantly more likely to erect monuments in this period — findings that directly connect the monument campaign to the structures of racial terror and Jim Crow enforcement rather than to any temporally proximate act of war commemoration. The strategic placement of monuments — on courthouse lawns, in front of state capitol buildings, at the entrances to public schools — rather than on battlefields or in cemeteries, further underscores their function as assertions of civic authority rather than purely memorial acts (Savage, 1997).

Parallel to its monument campaign, the UDC prosecuted an extensive educational lobbying effort. The organization's Committee on Education submitted approved textbook lists to state education authorities, produced its own "catechisms" for classroom use, and

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

successfully lobbied for the adoption of Lost Cause-aligned histories in multiple states. The Children of the Confederacy, an auxiliary organization founded in 1898, extended this educational project to younger generations through chapter meetings, competitions, and explicitly catechistic educational materials that presented Lost Cause tenets as historical fact in question-and-answer format (Heyse, 2006).

The UDC also played a central role in the establishment of Confederate memory institutions, including the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and the Confederate Museum in Richmond, Virginia, which functioned as repositories of Confederate artifacts and as platforms for the ongoing production and dissemination of Lost Cause historical scholarship. Through its network of state and local chapters, the UDC maintained a decentralized but ideologically coherent infrastructure for Confederate commemoration that proved remarkably resistant to historical revision throughout the twentieth century.

The organization's contemporary stance is characterized by an explicit disavowal of racism and white supremacy, formalized in statements issued in 2015 and reaffirmed in 2020. Scholars, however, have consistently assessed the UDC's historical role as inseparable from the racial politics of the Jim Crow era. Cox (2003) argues that the UDC's monument and educational campaigns were not merely commemorative but functioned as instruments of white supremacist civic culture, transmitting and legitimating the racial hierarchy of the New South to successive generations. Janney (2013) similarly documents the ways in which the UDC's reconciliationist rhetoric served to normalize Confederate ideology within national commemorative culture by 2020 the organization had declined to fewer than 18,000 members (SPLC, 2025).

#### **4.3 The Sons of Confederate Veterans: Ideology, Membership, and Activities**

The Sons of Confederate Veterans was founded on July 1, 1896, in Richmond, Virginia, as the male auxiliary counterpart to the UDC, with headquarters subsequently established at Elm Springs in Columbia, Tennessee. The organization's founding mandate was the perpetuation of Confederate memory, the honoring of Confederate veterans, and the

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

defense of Confederate historical reputation — goals that placed it squarely within the Lost Cause commemorative tradition from its inception (Wikipedia, 2025a).

The SCV's organizational trajectory across the twentieth century exhibits a well-documented pattern of radicalization from a relatively moderate heritage organization toward a more overtly political and ideologically committed stance. Internal battles during the 1990s between a "heritage" faction, which emphasized commemorative and genealogical purposes, and a more explicitly political faction, which sought to engage the SCV in active political campaigns against monument removals, flag retirements, and civil rights advances framed as "heritage attacks," were resolved in the post-2000 period in favor of the harder-line faction. By 2019, the organization reported approximately 30,000 members, though membership data for private organizations of this kind must be treated with appropriate methodological caution.

The SCV's documented activities include the erection of Confederate monuments and the flying of Confederate battle flags along interstate highways in Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia — visibility campaigns intended to normalize the display of Confederate imagery in public space and to signal organizational presence to both supporters and opponents. The organization has filed lawsuits challenging the removal of Confederate monuments and flags, engaged in extensive lobbying of state legislatures, and maintained an official organizational position — prominently stated on its website — that the Civil War was "not about slavery." This claim, which directly contradicts the preponderance of primary historical evidence including the secession declarations of the Confederate states, is presented by the organization as received historical truth rather than as the ideological position that historians have documented it to be (McPherson, 1988; SPLC, n.d.).

The SPLC has documented overlapping memberships between SCV chapters and neo-Confederate organizations including the League of the South and the Council of Conservative Citizens (Potok, 2000; SPLC intelligence reports, 2000–2024). These linkages do not implicate the SCV as an organization in the activities of these groups, and the SCV

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

has issued its own condemnations of racial bigotry. Nevertheless, the documented pattern of shared membership and ideological convergence between the SCV's stated heritage mission and the more explicitly racialized politics of neo-Confederate hate groups is a finding of significant analytical importance for understanding the ecosystem of Confederate commemoration.

#### **4.4 The Confederate Battle Flag: Symbolic Evolution and Political Appropriation**

The object commonly referred to as the "Confederate flag" in contemporary public discourse is not the official flag of the Confederate States of America, which passed through three successive designs during the war years. The symbol in question — a blue saltire cross bearing thirteen white stars on a red field — was designed by William Porcher Miles in 1861 and served as the battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia. It was never adopted as the official national flag of the Confederacy, though variants of it were incorporated into subsequent Confederate national flag designs. This distinction is historically significant because the flag's contemporary symbolic meaning derives almost entirely from its post-war career rather than its wartime function (Ruth, 2023; National Geographic, 2025).

In the immediate post-war decades, use of the battle flag was largely confined to Confederate veterans' reunions and commemorative events, with limited wider circulation. The flag's first major appropriation by a white-supremacist organization occurred through the Ku Klux Klan, which incorporated the battle flag into its symbolic repertoire in the early twentieth century, displaying it prominently at Klan rallies throughout the 1920s through 1950s. The Klan's adoption of the flag established its association with organized racial terrorism decades before the symbol entered mainstream Southern civilian use.

The flag's emergence as a widely recognized symbol of political resistance to civil rights was catalyzed by the 1948 States' Rights Democratic Party campaign — the "Dixiecrats" — which adopted the battle flag as its central emblem in opposition to President Harry Truman's civil rights platform. The campaign of South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

for the presidency under the Dixiecrat banner explicitly deployed the flag as a symbol of white Southern resistance to federal desegregation policy, permanently encoding this political meaning into the flag's symbolic repertoire (Thornton, 1996).

The adoption of the battle flag by Southern state governments in the civil rights era further solidified its political meaning. South Carolina raised the flag over its State House dome in 1961 — the centennial of Confederate secession, but also the height of the civil rights movement — where it flew until 2000, when it was relocated to the monument grounds, remaining there until its final removal in July 2015 following the Charleston church massacre. Mississippi incorporated a variant of the battle flag into its state flag in 1894 and retained it until 2020, when a popular referendum replaced it. The University of Mississippi began phasing out official use of the flag in the 1980s following sustained pressure from students and faculty.

The flag's contemporary presence in extremist contexts follows a consistent pattern documented across multiple events. Dylann Roof, the perpetrator of the 2015 Charleston massacre, was extensively photographed with the battle flag and explicitly identified it as a symbol of his white-supremacist ideology. The Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in August 2017 featured Confederate battle flags alongside neo-Nazi symbols and other white-nationalist insignia, a co-presence that confirmed the flag's function as a node in the broader symbolic network of American white nationalism. On January 6, 2021, a participant in the assault on the United States Capitol carried a Confederate battle flag through the building's corridors — the first documented instance of the battle flag's physical presence inside the Capitol, including during the Civil War itself.

Survey data reflects the depth of public disagreement about the flag's meaning. A 2020 Gallup poll found that 49 percent of Americans viewed the Confederate flag primarily as a symbol of racism, 36 percent viewed it primarily as a symbol of Southern heritage, and 15 percent viewed it as both simultaneously (Gallup, 2020). These figures vary substantially by race: the majority of Black Americans view the flag as a symbol of racism, while white

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

Southerners are more likely to identify it as a heritage symbol — a divergence that reflects the racialized distribution of symbolic meaning itself. Policy responses to the flag's controversial status have included NASCAR's June 2020 ban on Confederate flag displays at its events and the United States military's effective prohibition of the flag on bases, codified through the National Defense Authorization Act and Naming Commission process of 2021–2023.

#### **4.5 Documented Associations Between Neo-Confederate Organizations and White-Nationalist Networks**

The following subsections provide structured profiles of the principal organizations in which documented associations between neo-Confederate ideology and white-nationalist networks have been established through civil society intelligence reports, court records, and investigative journalism. These profiles are followed by a summary table (Table 1).

##### **4.5(a) League of the South**

The League of the South (LoS) was founded in 1994 by Michael Hill, a former University of Alabama history professor, with an initial platform of Southern cultural separatism and political independence. The SPLC designated the League of the South as a hate group, documenting its evolution from a culturally secessionist organization into one explicitly advocating for an "Anglo-Celtic" white ethnostate in the American South, incorporating Christian theocracy and biological racial hierarchy into its published platform (SPLC, n.d.; Wikipedia, 2025b). The organization launched the "Dump Beasley" campaign in 1996 to oppose South Carolina Governor David Beasley's support for removing the Confederate flag from the State House dome, establishing its role as a political actor in Confederate memory politics (SPLC, 2025).

The League of the South's co-organization of the August 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, was established as a matter of federal civil court record through the landmark *Sines v. Kessler* litigation. The jury verdict of November 23, 2021, held the League of the South among the defendants liable for conspiring to commit racial violence,

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

with the jury awarding plaintiffs more than \$25 million in punitive and compensatory damages (subsequently reduced to \$2.35 million by judicial order) (CBS News, 2021; Cooley, 2021). The Charlottesville rally also documented the League's operational alliance with neo-Nazi organizations including the National Alliance and Vanguard America/Patriot Front — alliances that place the organization squarely within the broader white-nationalist network rather than the heritage-only tradition it nominally claims.

The SPLC documented a peak of approximately 121 neo-Confederate hate groups in the United States circa 2000. By 2022, this number had declined to 14; by 2024, to 4. The League of the South itself declined to two operational chapters and was unable to organize its annual meeting in 2024 (SPLC, 2025). This decline is attributed to the legal and financial consequences of the *Sines v. Kessler* civil judgment, sustained SPLC pressure campaigns, and the absorption of neo-Confederate ideological content into the mainstream of broader far-right political movements.

#### **4.5(b) Council of Conservative Citizens**

The Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC) was the institutional successor to the White Citizens' Councils — the "Citizens' Councils of America" — that had organized white resistance to school desegregation across the South following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The CCC explicitly deployed Confederate flags at organizational meetings and published content characterizing African Americans in derogatory racial terms. The SPLC designated the CCC as a white-nationalist hate group. Its significance for the present analysis derives in large part from Dylann Roof's own manifesto, in which he identified the CCC's website as a primary source of the radicalization material that led him to the Charleston massacre — establishing a direct causal chain from a neo-Confederate organization's published content to an act of racially motivated mass murder. Overlapping memberships between CCC and SCV chapters were documented in SPLC intelligence reports (Potok, 2000).

#### **4.5(c) Identity Dixie**

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

Identity Dixie operated as an online neo-Confederate community and content platform, producing essays and commentary that blended Lost Cause historical revisionism with explicit white-nationalist ideology. The SPLC exposed the identities of key figures within the organization in 2019, precipitating a significant organizational decline. Identity Dixie represents the digital-era adaptation of neo-Confederate ideology — no longer dependent on physical organizational infrastructure but capable of reaching and radicalizing audiences through online publishing platforms and social media networks.

#### 4.5(d) Patriot Front

Patriot Front, which emerged from the wreckage of Vanguard America following the Charlottesville rally — in which Vanguard America members participated and one of whom was charged with Heather Heyer's murder — is a neo-Nazi organization that incorporates Confederate imagery alongside other American nationalist symbols into its visual identity. Patriot Front's use of Confederate symbolism is part of a broader strategic pattern in which explicitly neo-Nazi groups adopt ostensibly American or Southern heritage symbols to normalize their presence in the broader right-wing symbolic landscape. Patriot Front was named as a defendant in *Sines v. Kessler* under its predecessor identity (*Sines v. Kessler* case record, 2017–2021).

**Table 1. Neo-Confederate and White-Nationalist Organizations: Summary Profile**

Organization	Founded	SPLC Designation	Key Confederate Symbols Used	Documented Violent Events or Legal Actions
League of the South	1994	Hate group (neo-Confederate / white nationalist)	Confederate battle flag; SCV-style insignia; "Southern Cross" imagery	Co-organized Charlottesville Unite the Right rally (2017); found liable in <i>Sines v. Kessler</i> civil verdict (Nov. 23, 2021); \$25M+ damages awarded
Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC)	1985 (successor to White Citizens')	Hate group (white nationalist)	Confederate battle flag displayed at organizational	Website cited by Dylann Roof as radicalization source; Roof perpetrated Charleston AME church

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

Organization	Founded	SPLC Designation	Key Confederate Symbols Used	Documented Violent Events or Legal Actions
	Councils, 1954)		meetings and publications	massacre, June 17, 2015 (9 killed)
Identity Dixie	Approx. 2016	Hate group (neo-Confederate)	Confederate battle flag; "Bonnie Blue" flag; Southern cross imagery in digital content	SPLC exposure of leadership (2019) precipitated organizational collapse; no documented violent events directly attributed
Patriot Front (formerly Vanguard America)	2017 (reconstituted from Vanguard America)	Hate group (neo-Nazi / white nationalist)	Confederate battle flag alongside neo-Nazi and nationalist imagery	Vanguard America participation in Charlottesville (2017); member James Fields Jr. convicted of murder of Heather Heyer; named defendant in <i>Sines v. Kessler</i>
Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) — <i>select chapters</i>	1896	Not SPLC-designated as hate group (organization-wide); individual chapter crossover documented	Confederate battle flag; SCV insignia; highway flag displays	Documented overlapping membership with CCC and LoS chapters (Potok, 2000; SPLC, 2000–2024); organizational activities include monument defense litigation

*Note.* SPLC = Southern Poverty Law Center. "Documented violent events" refers to events in which organizational membership or affiliation has been established through court records, investigative documentation, or self-identification. The inclusion of SCV in this table reflects documented chapter-level overlapping membership patterns and does not imply organizational-level designation as a hate group. Sources: SPLC Intelligence Reports (2000–2025); *Sines v. Kessler* case record; Potok (2000); Gallup (2020).

Key Dates in Confederate Commemoration: A Chronological Overview	
Year	Event
1865	

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

End of the American Civil War; Confederate surrender at Appomattox (April 9)

1866

Edward A. Pollard publishes

The Lost Cause

, inaugurating the formal ideological system

1869

Southern Historical Society founded; organized production of pro-Confederate historiography begins

1889

United Confederate Veterans (UCV) founded; national veterans' network established

1894

United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) founded, Nashville, TN (September 10)

1896

Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) founded, Richmond, VA (July 1)

1898

Children of the Confederacy auxiliary established by UDC

1900–1930

First wave of Confederate monument construction; UDC-driven; correlated with Jim Crow and lynching rates

1948

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

States' Rights Democratic Party ("Dixiecrats") adopts Confederate battle flag as emblem of opposition to civil rights

1954–1968

Second wave of monument construction; correlated with civil rights movement and NAACP chapter presence

1961

South Carolina raises Confederate battle flag over State House dome (centennial of secession)

1994

League of the South founded by Michael Hill; SPLC subsequently designates as hate group

2015

Dylann Roof murders nine at Charleston AME church (June 17); South Carolina removes flag from State House grounds (July); monument removal wave begins

2017

Unite the Right rally, Charlottesville, VA (August 11–12); Heather Heyer killed;

Sines v. Kessler

filed (October)

2020

George Floyd murder (May 25); 169 Confederate monuments removed; NASCAR bans Confederate flag (June); Mississippi retires state flag incorporating battle flag

2021

Confederate battle flag carried inside U.S. Capitol during January 6 insurrection;

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

Sines v. Kessler

jury verdict (November 23); NDAA Naming Commission established

2023

Nine formerly Confederate-named military bases officially renamed under NDAA Naming Commission

2024

Neo-Confederate hate groups decline to 4 nationally (SPLC); League of the South unable to hold annual meeting

---

## 5. Discussion

The findings presented above, taken together, support a theoretical synthesis that frames Lost Cause ideology as a "memory movement" — a sustained, organized collective effort to shape public memory of a contested historical event in ways that serve the present-day interests of specific social groups (O'Connell, 2022). Memory movements, as distinct from political or social movements per se, operate primarily through the production and defense of interpretive frameworks rather than through direct political action, though the two modalities are deeply intertwined. The Lost Cause memory movement is distinctive in the historical record for its longevity, its organizational sophistication, its cross-institutional reach (monuments, textbooks, museums, veterans' organizations, women's associations, religious institutions), and its demonstrable responsiveness to the dynamics of racial power — resurging specifically at moments when African American political and civil rights advances appear to threaten the racial status quo.

### 5.1 Three Temporal Regimes and the Racial Power Thesis

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

O'Connell's (2022) three-regime model, confirmed through multinomial regression analysis of a comprehensive dataset of Confederate monument construction across the U.S. South, provides the most methodologically rigorous empirical demonstration of the connection between Confederate commemoration and racial power dynamics. The first regime — the 1900s–1930s peak — is characterized by direct correlation with structural racism indicators: Jim Crow legislative entrenchment, rates of racial lynching, and the organizational presence of the UDC. These correlations establish that the monument campaign was not primarily a temporally proximate memorial response to the Civil War — the war had ended thirty-five years before the peak of construction — but rather a present-tense assertion of white civic supremacy at a moment when Jim Crow institutions were being most aggressively constructed and enforced. The second regime — the 1960s resurgence — operates under a distinct racial-political logic: not UDC-driven and not correlated with slavery indicators, but positively correlated with the presence of NAACP chapters. This finding supports the interpretation that the 1960s monument wave was a reactive countermovement, a symbolic counter-mobilization against the civil rights movement's challenge to Southern racial order. The third regime — the contemporary period — returns the UDC to centrality but is characterized by what Bonilla-Silva (2003) theorizes as "colorblind racism": racial motivation is denied or concealed behind the "heritage" framing, even as the organizational and symbolic apparatus of Confederate commemoration continues to function in racially stratified ways.

## **5.2 The Heritage-Versus-Hate Framing Debate**

The "heritage vs. hate" binary that dominates popular and political discourse about Confederate symbols is analytically insufficient, and the findings of this study provide specific grounds for that insufficiency. The binary presupposes that heritage and hate are mutually exclusive categories — that a symbol or organization can be unambiguously assigned to one camp or the other. In practice, the evidence reveals a more complex structure: the organizational heritage of Confederate commemoration is inseparable from its racial politics, not because all participants in Confederate memory culture are motivated

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

by racial animus, but because the foundational mythology that the heritage organizations propagate — the Lost Cause — is itself a racial-political construction, designed to legitimate the post-war racial order and to deny the centrality of slavery to the Confederate cause.

The UDC and SCV both issue official condemnations of racism and white supremacy, and there is no reason to doubt that many of their members sincerely understand their participation as purely genealogical or commemorative in character. Nevertheless, the organizations' documented historical roles — producing the monuments, the textbooks, the catechisms, and the organizational networks through which Lost Cause mythology was institutionalized — are not separable from the racial-political context in which those roles were performed. A heritage organization whose foundational heritage is a deliberately constructed racial-political mythology occupies an analytically distinctive position that the simple heritage/hate dichotomy cannot capture.

### **5.3 The Symbolic Feedback Loop**

A finding of particular theoretical significance is the bidirectional relationship between mainstream Confederate commemorative culture and extremist white-nationalist organizations. Neo-Confederate organizations such as the League of the South and the Council of Conservative Citizens exploit the legitimizing function of mainstream Confederate commemoration — its association with civic respectability, historical authority, and Southern cultural identity — for recruitment and normalization. Organizations that frame themselves as heritage defenders provide a point of entry into Confederate ideology that can facilitate progression toward more explicitly racialized positions. Conversely, the documented association of Confederate symbols with white-nationalist violence creates pressure on mainstream commemorative organizations to distance themselves from extremism — a distancing that, as the evidence demonstrates, has been consistently insufficient to prevent the symbolic feedback loop from operating.

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

The Charlottesville Unite the Right rally is the paradigmatic illustration of this feedback loop: the stated purpose of the rally was opposition to the removal of a Confederate statue — a mainstream Confederate commemorative issue — and the event drew together a coalition that included neo-Confederates, neo-Nazis, and white nationalists under a shared symbolic canopy that included Confederate battle flags alongside swastika insignia. The *Sines v. Kessler* verdict confirmed in a court of law that this convergence was not incidental but conspiratorial.

#### **5.4 First Amendment and Public-Space Governance Dimensions**

The legal and governance dimensions of Confederate commemoration deserve specific acknowledgment. The display of Confederate symbols on private property and in private organizational contexts is constitutionally protected speech under the First Amendment, and this study does not argue otherwise. The analytical and policy questions arise specifically in the context of public space — government buildings, public schools, public parks, courthouse lawns, and military installations — where the state's decision to display or tolerate Confederate symbols constitutes an endorsement, and where the removal or retention of such symbols is a matter of democratic governance rather than individual expressive freedom. The NDAA Naming Commission process, which produced the renaming of nine military installations by 2023, represents a model of deliberate, evidence-based public memory policy that navigated these governance dimensions through an explicitly nonpartisan, congressionally mandated process — a policy model that the findings of this study support as appropriate for analogous decisions about other publicly owned Confederate memorials.

#### **5.5 Comparative International Perspectives**

The U.S. approach to Confederate commemoration is illuminated by comparison with analogous cases in other national contexts. Post-World War II Germany adopted a legal framework explicitly prohibiting the public display of Nazi symbols and the rehabilitation of Nazi ideology, premised on the democratic judgment that the symbolic normalization

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

of a genocidal racial-supremacist regime constitutes a present-day harm rather than a protected historical expression. While the German legal context is not directly transferable to the American constitutional framework, the German case establishes that democratic societies are capable of making deliberate, principled decisions to decertify the public legitimacy of symbols associated with racial atrocity — and that such decisions need not be experienced as culturally devastating by the societies that make them. Post-apartheid South Africa's ongoing and deeply contested monument reckonings — which have involved the removal, relocation, and contextualization of colonial and apartheid-era statues through processes that often include community consultation — provide a more directly analogous case of a society negotiating the memorialization of a racial-domination system whose survivors remain living members of the political community.

### **5.6 Policy Implications**

The findings of this study support several evidence-based policy recommendations, offered here as conclusions from the scholarly literature rather than as partisan political positions. First, with respect to monuments: the scholarly consensus supports neither uncritical retention nor uniform destruction, but rather a deliberate, contextually sensitive process of evaluation that considers the historical origins, placement, and demonstrated symbolic function of individual monuments. Relocation to museum or battlefield contexts, with appropriate historical contextualization, represents the approach most consistent with both historical accuracy and the preservation of the physical historical record. Second, with respect to curricula: the pervasive influence of Lost Cause mythology on Southern and national school curricula, documented across multiple generations, represents a public education failure with ongoing consequences for civic knowledge. Curriculum reform aligned with the scholarly consensus on Civil War causation is both educationally justified and democratically necessary. Third, the NDAA Naming Commission model — a bipartisan, congressionally mandated, evidence-based process — represents the appropriate institutional mechanism for addressing the public-space legacy of Confederate commemoration in contexts governed by federal authority.

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

### 5.7 Study Limitations

This study's limitations, as noted in the methods section, bear reiteration in the discussion context. The reliance on SPLC documentation for organizational profiling, while methodologically justified by the SPLC's unmatched systematic tracking of extremist organizations, introduces the caveat that this source reflects an institutionally committed perspective. Future research should seek to triangulate SPLC data with independent investigative and academic sources wherever possible. The qualitative synthesis design precludes causal inference at the level of individual-level radicalization pathways; the relationship between exposure to Lost Cause mythology and progression to white-nationalist ideology, while suggested by multiple individual cases including Dylann Roof's, requires further empirical investigation through survey and experimental methods.

---

## 6. Conclusion

This manuscript has argued, on the basis of a systematic multi-source analysis, that Lost Cause ideology constitutes a form of historical negationism with documented, ongoing political consequences for American public life. The scholarly consensus across history and sociology is unambiguous and has been so for several decades: slavery was the central, animating cause of Confederate secession and the Civil War; the Confederate states' own secession declarations establish this fact beyond reasonable historical dispute; and the Lost Cause narrative — the proposition that the war was fundamentally about constitutional principle or states' rights — is a deliberate post-war ideological construction, produced and maintained by specific organizations for specific political purposes.

The three temporal regimes of Confederate monument construction documented by O'Connell (2022) and synthesized here with the organizational histories of the UDC and SCV establish a clear empirical pattern: Confederate commemorative activity surges in response to moments of African American civil rights advancement — Jim Crow consolidation in the 1900s–1920s, civil rights movement in the 1950s–1960s, and renewed

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

political mobilization in the contemporary period. This pattern is inconsistent with an interpretation of Confederate commemoration as primarily genealogical or temporally proximate memorial activity, and consistent with its interpretation as a form of racial counter-mobilization.

The decline of formal neo-Confederate organizational infrastructure — from 121 SPLC-documented hate groups at peak circa 2000 to 4 by 2024 — represents a genuine and significant development, attributable in meaningful part to the legal consequences of the *Sines v. Kessler* verdict, SPLC pressure campaigns, and the reputational damage of Charlottesville. However, this organizational decline does not signal the decline of neo-Confederate ideology itself. The absorption of Lost Cause mythology and Confederate symbolic politics into the mainstream of the contemporary American far right — where it circulates in political rhetoric, social media content, and electoral mobilization without requiring the institutional infrastructure of dedicated neo-Confederate organizations — represents a more diffuse and in some respects more durable challenge to American historical literacy and democratic civic culture.

The scholarly and civic response to this challenge requires continued interdisciplinary investment: historical scholarship that maintains rigorous, evidence-based public communication about Civil War causation; sociological research that tracks the evolving mechanisms through which Lost Cause mythology is transmitted and politically mobilized; and evidence-based public memory policy that treats the built environment of Confederate commemoration as a matter of democratic governance rather than neutral historical preservation. The findings of this study contribute to that ongoing collective intellectual and civic project.

---

## References

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

1. Barnett, B. A. (2016). League of the South's internet rhetoric: Neo-Confederate community-building online. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 12(1), 151-175. <https://www.jstor.org>
2. Blight, D. W. (2001). *Race and reunion: The Civil War in American memory*. Harvard University Press. <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674005877>
3. Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Rowman & Littlefield.
4. CBS News. (2021, November 24). Jury awards \$26 million in Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally civil case. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com>
5. Cooley LLP. (2021, November 23). Charlottesville plaintiffs secure justice against white supremacist leaders and groups with historic lawsuit win [Press release]. <https://www.cooley.com>
6. Cox, K. L. (2003). *Dixie's daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the preservation of Confederate culture*. University Press of Florida.
7. Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2024). Lost Cause. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lost-Cause>
8. Encyclopedia Virginia. (n.d.). United Daughters of the Confederacy. *Encyclopedia Virginia*. <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/united-daughters-of-the-confederacy>
9. Foster, G. M. (1987). *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the emergence of the New South*. Oxford University Press.
10. Gallup. (2020). *Confederate flag: Majority still see it as Southern pride, not racism*. Gallup News. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/321310/confederate-flag-symbol-southern-pride-racism.aspx>
11. Halbwachs, M. (1950). *La mémoire collective*. Presses Universitaires de France. [English translation: Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.]
12. Heyse, A. L. (2006). *Teachers of the Lost Cause: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the rhetoric of their catechisms* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland]. Digital Repository at the University of Maryland. <http://hdl.handle.net/1903/4060>

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

13. Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (Eds.). (1983). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
14. Janney, C. E. (2013). *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the limits of reconciliation*. University of North Carolina Press.
15. Levinson, S. (1998). *Written in stone: Public monuments in changing societies*. Duke University Press.
16. McPherson, J. M. (1988). *Battle cry of freedom: The Civil War era*. Oxford University Press.
17. National Geographic. (2025). How the Confederate flag became an enduring symbol of racism. *National Geographic*. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/confederate-flag-history>
18. Nora, P. (1989). Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire. *Representations*, 26, 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>
19. O'Connell, H. A. (2022). More than rocks and stone: Confederate monuments, memory movements, and race. *Social Forces*, 100(4), 1479–1502. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soabo81>
20. O'Connell, H. A. (2022). Racism and Confederate monument construction: Temporal regimes distinguishing the 1900s, 1960s, and contemporary decades. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 8(1), 62–78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23326492211057826>
21. Olick, J. K., & Robbins, J. (1998). Social memory studies: From "collective memory" to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 105–140. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.105>
22. Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
23. Pollard, E. A. (1866). *The Lost Cause: A new Southern history of the war of the Confederates*. E. B. Treat.
24. Potok, M. (2000). The neo-Confederate movement. *SPLC Intelligence Report*. Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org>

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)

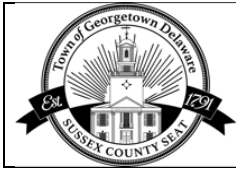
25. Ruth, M. (2023). Confederate flag. *EBSCO Research Starters*.  
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/confederate-flag>
26. Savage, K. (1997). *Standing soldiers, kneeling slaves: Race, war, and monument in nineteenth-century America*. Princeton University Press.
27. Southern Poverty Law Center. (n.d.). Neo-Confederate. *SPLC Extremist Files*.  
<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/neo-confederate>
28. Southern Poverty Law Center. (2025). Decline of the neo-Confederates: 2024 year in hate & extremism. <https://www.splcenter.org/year-in-hate-and-extremism/2024/neo-confederates>
29. Thornton, K. (1996). The Confederate flag and the meaning of Southern history. *Civil War History*, 42(3), 217–232. <https://www.jstor.org>
30. American Historical Association. (2017). Historical perspectives on Confederate monuments. *AHA Congressional Briefing*. <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/october-2017/historical-perspectives-on-confederate-monuments>
31. Wikipedia (citing primary sources). (2025a). Sons of Confederate Veterans. *Wikipedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sons\\_of\\_Confederate\\_Veterans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sons_of_Confederate_Veterans)
32. Wikipedia (citing primary sources). (2025b). League of the South. *Wikipedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_the\\_South](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_the_South)
33. Wilson, C. R. (1980). *Baptized in blood: The religion of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920*. University of Georgia Press.
34. *Sines et al. v. Kessler et al.*, No. 3:17-cv-00072 (W.D. Va. 2021). Jury verdict, November 23, 2021. 324 F. Supp. 3d 765 (W.D. Va. 2018).

---

Approximate Word Count: 7,850 words | *Journal of American Historical Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 2,

2026

(Generated by Artificial Intelligence)



## GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Town of Georgetown encourages the public to participate in the process of open government and offers the following guidelines with respect to public comment for the purpose of conducting orderly meetings. These guidelines shall typically be adhered to but are not meant to be inflexible or mandatory rules on Council.

### TIME CONSIDERATIONS

- The Public Comment Period will be placed on all agendas for public meetings, and will typically be the next to the last item of business, just prior to Adjournment. The Town reserves the right to change the order of items on Agendas. (Compliant with Del.C. Title 29, § 10004(a)(2)).
- The time limit for each individual (whether speaking in person or by Zoom/remote participation) to speak is 3 minutes.
- Where the total time for public comment has exceeded 40 minutes, Council reserves the right, by majority vote, to end the public comment period, but will allow remaining speakers the option to participate in public comment at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting and/or submit their comments in writing after the meeting.
- Speakers may not give their time to other people.

### GUIDELINES

- All speakers are required to address their remarks to the chair.
- The purpose of public comment is to allow the speaker's remarks to be heard. It is not meant to be an opportunity to question or debate members of Council and substantive questioning on issues will not be responded to.
- All speakers are required to keep to the 3-minute time limit. This ensures consistency and fairness.
- The chair should thank each speaker, whether positive or negative.
- In general, there will not be responses to public comment. However, the chair may provide brief factual information, if appropriate.
- We recommend using surnames to address speakers. If you use first names for some speakers, use them for all.
- Councilmembers should typically refrain from speaking during this portion of the meeting.
- Town Staff will be ready to note input or questions from the public and to provide responses, or arrange for one-on-one follow up with a speaker, where appropriate, at a later date. Town Staff will not be called upon to, and shall not, give public answers on the spot.

### **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS (Council and Public)**

- Model courtesy and respect and encourage members of the public to do the same.
- The public has the right to make critical and harsh remarks.
- Members of the public do not have the right to disrupt the meeting.
- The chair may caution or limit demonstrations (booing, hissing, and clapping). These can be chilling to discourse.
- Disruptive members of the public will be given three warnings to cease from the disruptive behavior before being asked to leave the meeting.
- Any person engaging in threatening speech or conduct will be required to leave the meeting immediately.

### **SUBMITTED WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Includes comments submitted in written form via US Mail, electronic delivery, and hand delivered correspondence.
- The person submitting the comments must identify himself or herself by name and address, including zip code. Anonymous comments will not be read.
- Comments must be received by the Town Manager's office at least four hours in advance of the meeting.
- Only comments which request to be read into the record shall be read aloud at the meeting. The chair may summarize other written correspondence at his/her discretion.
- The time limit of 3 minutes shall also apply for submitted letters (read aloud).
- All comments must address a topic related to Town governance.

**SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Now is the time to hear from our public. We welcome your comments which are very important to us. Note that all comments are limited to 3 minutes.

As a reminder, please go to the podium to comment. Please give us your name, address, and address your remarks to the chair.

Note that we will not be entering into dialogue at this time. The purpose of this agenda item is for YOU, the public, to inform US, the council, about your views.

# TOWN MANAGER REPORT



TOWN OF  
GEORGETOWN

## PROJECT UPDATES

- Parson Lane Trailhead & Parking Area
  - Four (4) alternates awarded (based on funding)
    - Fencing
    - Concrete Pad & Amenities
    - Electrical
    - Landscaping
  - Cost: \$191,758.00



## PROJECT UPDATES

- Police and Public Works Facility
- Column and footer installation in process
- Utilities to follow





# AMERICA 250 ACTIVITIES

- Artisan & Craft Festival
  - Signature event – June 13, 2026
- Other Activities
  - Crosswalk Art (completed)
  - Fire Hydrant Painting (completed)
  - Building Mural (in process)



Town of Georgetown invites you to:  
**Georgetown Spirit of 1776  
Artisan & Craft Festival**

**Saturday, June 13  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
South Race Street  
Georgetown, Delaware

**Celebrate Georgetown's  
place in America's story**  
Georgetown's history comes to life with music, cultural performances, food vendors, family activities and stories from the people and communities that helped shape our town. Join the Town of Georgetown for a free community celebration honoring America's 250th and the local stories, traditions and people that make Georgetown home.

**FEATURING**

- Historical presentations
- Nanticoke Indian Dance Troupe
- African American heritage presentation
- Latino history and dance
- Patriotic music
- Food and arts vendors
- Scavenger hunt
- Georgetown Public Library Summer Reading Kickoff Party

Free and open to the public

Rain date:  
Saturday, June 20

Library event: The Georgetown Public Library Summer Reading Kickoff Party will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. at the library.

## GENERAL ITEMS

### ■ Upcoming Events

- America 250 Committee: Tuesday, June 9, 3:00 PM, Town Hall
- America 250 Committee: Thursday, June 11, 10:00 AM, Town Hall
- Artisan & Craft Festival: Saturday, June 13, 10:00 AM, South Race Street
- Planning Commission: Wednesday, June 17, 6:00 PM, Town Hall
- Town Offices Closed: Friday, June 19, in observation of Juneteenth

### ■ Legislative Update

- Bill Tracking (*Updated June 8, 2026*)
- 10 legislative days remain



**Town of Georgetown**  
**Second Session, 153<sup>rd</sup> Delaware General Assembly**  
**Legislative Report**

Prepared by:  
 Eugene S. Dvornick, Jr., Town Manager  
 June 8, 2026

Bill	Description	Position	Status	
HB 133 w/ HA 4	Fines and Fees	Neutral	PASSED (03/24/26)	Judiciary (03/24/26)
HB 135 w/ HA 1	Protections for Delawareans Experiencing Homelessness (04/30/26)	Oppose	Housing Committee Hearing (04/21/26) Not Released from Committee (05/06/26)	
<del>HB 252</del>	<del>Personal Use Consumption – Civil Violation</del>	<del>Neutral</del>	<del>Health &amp; Human Development Out of Committee (01/28/26)</del>	
HS 1 for HB 252	Personal Use Consumption – Civil Violation	Neutral	Health & Human Development Out of Committee (01/28/26) Substituted (03/10/26)	
HB 270	Mini-Bond	Support	Signed by Governor (01/30/26)	

**Updated June 8, 2026**

HB 275	Bond Bill (Governor's Recommended)	Under Review	Capital Infrastructure (01/29/26)	
HB 286	Realty Transfer Tax (State Portion)	Under Review	Revenue & Finance (01/29/26)	
HB 294 w/ HA 1	Parking Spaces for Pregnant Persons (State buildings and facilities) (04/21/26)	Neutral	PASSED (05/07/26)	Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)
HB 295 w/ HA 1	Parking Spaces for Veterans (State buildings and facilities) (04/21/26)	Neutral	PASSED (05/07/26)	Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)
HB 306 w/ HA 1, HA 3	Chat Bot Notification (05/05/26)	Oppose	PASSED (05/05/26)	Banking, Business, Insurance & Technology (05/05/26)
HB 310	Large Energy Use Facilities (Tax credit exclusion)	Neutral	PASSED (05/05/26)	Banking, Business, Insurance & Technology (05/05/26)
HB 363	20 MPH Residential Speed Limit	Under Review	Public Safety & Homeland Security Tabled in Committee (05/05/26)	
HB 339	Virtual Meeting Anchor	Neutral	PASSED (05/12/26)	Executive Out of Committee (05/21/26)

**Updated June 8, 2026**

HB 407	Brownfields Grant Funding	Support	Natural Resources & Energy (05/07/26) Out of Committee (05/13/26) Appropriations (05/14/26)	
HB 413	Expands Green Light Use	Support	Public Safety & Homeland Security (05/12/26) Out of Committee (05/19/26)	
HB 416	Realty Transfer Tax (reduction by ¼ of a percent - State)	Under Review	Revenue & Finance (05/12/26)	
HB 426	Electronic Submission of State Aid to Municipalities for Streets	Neutral	Revenue & Finance (05/19/26)	
HB 428	Constitutional Amendment - Crossover Day (First Leg)	Support	Administration (05/19/26)	
HB 450	Reforming Opportunities and Accelerated Development for Delaware (ROAD-DE Act)	Under Review	Economic Development/Banking/Insurance & Commerce (05/21/26)	
HB 454	Protections for Delawareans Experiencing Homelessness	Under Review	Housing (06/04/26)	
HJR 11	Housing Opportunity and Poverty Elimination (HOPE) Court Working Group	Under Review	Judiciary (05/12/26) Out of Committee (05/20/26)	

Page 3 of 5

**Updated June 8, 2026**

SB 23	Housing Supply and Housing Affordability	Oppose		Housing & Land Use (04/21/26)
SS 1 for SB 23	Housing Supply and Housing Affordability	Oppose		Housing & Land Use (05/11/26) Out of Committee (05/13/26)
SS 1 for SB 161	Behavioral Health Treatment Oversight (04/30/26)	Under Review	Health & Human Development (06/04/26)	PASSED (05/21/26)
SB 222	Constitutional Amendment – Term Limits (First Leg)	Neutral		Executive (01/13/26)
SB 225	FY 2027 Appropriations Bill (Governor’s Recommended)	Under Review		Finance (01/29/26)
SB 233 w/ SA 1	Removal of Ice and Snow (Vehicles)	Support	Public Safety & Homeland Security Out of Committee (05/19/26)	PASSED (05/12/26)
SB 241	Project Labor Agreements – Public Works Projects > \$5 Million	Oppose		Labor Out of Committee (03/11/26) Finance (03/12/26)
SB 247	Deposit of Funds	Support	Signed by Governor (05/19/26)	
SB 249	Substance Use Harm Reduction	Under Review	Health & Human Development (05/19/26)	PASSED (05/14/26)

Page 4 of 5

**Updated June 8, 2026**

SB 310 w/ SA 1	Establishment of a Disaster Recovery Fund	Support	Administration (05/21/26)	PASSED (05/20/26)
SB 322	Repeals of School District Ability to Increase Tax Rates 10%	Neutral		Education Out of Committee (05/20/26)
SB 338	Removal of Cap on Poles/Wires	Support		Executive (05/28/26)
	Watch list: Affordable Housing Energy policy FOIA Zoning Reform			

**Updated June 8, 2026**

**END OF PRESENTATION**



**TOWN OF  
GEORGETOWN**



## Town of Georgetown Second Session, 153<sup>rd</sup> Delaware General Assembly Legislative Report

Prepared by:  
Eugene S. Dvornick, Jr., Town Manager  
June 8, 2026

Bill	Description	Position	Status	
HB 133 w/ HA 4	Fines and Fees	Neutral	PASSED (03/24/26)	Judiciary (03/24/26)
HB 135 w/ HA 1	Protections for Delawareans Experiencing Homelessness (04/30/26)	Oppose	Housing Committee Hearing (04/21/26) Not Released from Committee (05/06/26)	
<del>HB 252</del>	<del>Personal Use Consumption – Civil Violation</del>	<del>Neutral</del>	<del>Health &amp; Human Development Out of Committee (01/28/26)</del>	
HS 1 for HB 252	Personal Use Consumption – Civil Violation	Neutral	Health & Human Development Out of Committee (01/28/26) Substituted (03/10/26)	
HB 270	Mini-Bond	Support	Signed by Governor (01/30/26)	

HB 275	Bond Bill (Governor's Recommended)	Under Review	Capital Infrastructure (01/29/26)	
HB 286	Realty Transfer Tax (State Portion)	Under Review	Revenue & Finance (01/29/26)	
HB 294 w/ HA 1	Parking Spaces for Pregnant Persons (State buildings and facilities) (04/21/26)	Neutral	PASSED (05/07/26)	Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)
HB 295 w/ HA 1	Parking Spaces for Veterans (State buildings and facilities) (04/21/26)	Neutral	PASSED (05/07/26)	Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)
HB 306 w/ HA 1, HA 3	Chat Bot Notification (05/05/26)	Oppose	PASSED (05/05/26)	Banking, Business, Insurance & Technology (05/05/26)
HB 310	Large Energy Use Facilities (Tax credit exclusion)	Neutral	PASSED (05/05/26)	Banking, Business, Insurance & Technology (05/05/26)
HB 363	20 MPH Residential Speed Limit	Under Review	Public Safety & Homeland Security Tabled in Committee (05/05/26)	
HB 339	Virtual Meeting Anchor	Neutral	PASSED (05/12/26)	Executive Out of Committee (05/21/26)

HB 407	Brownfields Grant Funding	Support	Natural Resources & Energy (05/07/26) Out of Committee (05/13/26) Appropriations (05/14/26)	
HB 413	Expands Green Light Use	Support	Public Safety & Homeland Security (05/12/26) Out of Committee (05/19/26)	
HB 416	Realty Transfer Tax (reduction by ¼ of a percent - State)	Under Review	Revenue & Finance (05/12/26)	
HB 426	Electronic Submission of State Aid to Municipalities for Streets	Neutral	Revenue & Finance (05/19/26)	
HB 428	Constitutional Amendment - Crossover Day (First Leg)	Support	Administration (05/19/26)	
HB 450	Reforming Opportunities and Accelerated Development for Delaware (ROAD-DE Act)	Under Review	Economic Development/Banking/Insurance & Commerce (05/21/26)	
HB 454	Protections for Delawareans Experiencing Homelessness	Under Review	Housing (06/04/26)	
HJR 11	Housing Opportunity and Poverty Elimination (HOPE) Court Working Group	Under Review	Judiciary (05/12/26) Out of Committee (05/20/26)	

SB 23	Housing Supply and Housing Affordability	Oppose		Housing & Land Use (04/21/26)
SS 1 for SB 23	Housing Supply and Housing Affordability	Oppose		Housing & Land Use (05/11/26) Out of Committee (05/13/26)
SS 1 for SB 161	Behavioral Health Treatment Oversight (04/30/26)	Under Review	Health & Human Development (06/04/26)	PASSED (05/21/26)
SB 222	Constitutional Amendment – Term Limits (First Leg)	Neutral		Executive (01/13/26)
SB 225	FY 2027 Appropriations Bill (Governor’s Recommended)	Under Review		Finance (01/29/26)
SB 233 w/ SA 1	Removal of Ice and Snow (Vehicles)	Support	Public Safety & Homeland Security Out of Committee (05/19/26)	PASSED (05/12/26)
SB 241	Project Labor Agreements – Public Works Projects > \$5 Million	Oppose		Labor Out of Committee (03/11/26) Finance (03/12/26)
SB 247	Deposit of Funds	Support	Signed by Governor (05/19/26)	
SB 249	Substance Use Harm Reduction	Under Review	Health & Human Development (05/19/26)	PASSED (05/14/26)

SB 310 w/ SA 1	Establishment of a Disaster Recovery Fund	Support	Administration (05/21/26)	PASSED (05/20/26)
SB 322	Repeals of School District Ability to Increase Tax Rates 10%	Neutral		Education Out of Committee (05/20/26)
SB 338	Removal of Cap on Poles/Wires	Support		Executive (05/28/26)
	Watch list: Affordable Housing Energy policy FOIA Zoning Reform			