



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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**JAMES F. KENNEY**  
Mayor

June 15, 2020

Margot Berg  
Public Art Director  
City Hall Room 116  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

***Via Email***

Dear Ms. Berg:

As steward of the largest public art collection of any American city, you know better than most that our history is consistently evolving. As more voices emerge, and new and different points of view come to light, we must reconsider how we honor individuals whose likeness has been enshrined in monuments. With that understanding, I request you initiate as soon as possible the public process through the Art Commission for the possible removal of the statue of Christopher Columbus located at Marconi Plaza on South Broad Street.

Christopher Columbus, like many historical figures, has supporters and detractors. For centuries, he has been venerated with the stories of his traversing the Atlantic and “discovering” the “New World”. However, his history is much more infamous. Mistakenly believing he had found a new route to India, Columbus enslaved indigenous people, and punished individuals who failed to meet his expected service by severing limbs, or in some cases, murder. Surely the totality of this history must be accounted for when considering whether to erect or maintain a monument to this person.

I believe that a public process, allowing for all viewpoints, especially those of indigenous people whose ancestors suffered under the rule of European settlers, to be in the best interest of the City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'James F. Kenney'.

James F. Kenney  
Mayor

CC: Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer  
Brian Abernathy, Managing Director  
Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner, Department of Parks and Recreation