



# RACIAL JUSTICE & OUR NATIONAL MONUMENTS

## CONCERNS OF THE CREATION JUSTICE COMMUNITY

### How Do National Monuments Relate to Racial Justice?

Our national monuments, protected through acts of Congress or by the President under the Antiquities Act of 1906, conserve our shared spiritual, cultural, and natural heritage for future generations. As people of faith, we believe all people are made in God's image and that we are called to confront the sin of racism which has bitterly divided our nation since its beginning. To facilitate racial healing, or national monuments should convey truthful and inclusive stories of our collective journey to overcome racism.

### Recent Racial Justice Concerns Regarding National Monuments

Religious communities strongly supported the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition that successfully advocated for the permanent protection of more than 100,000 antiquities in the Bears Ears National Monument, which was established in December 2016 under the Antiquities Act of 1906. These antiquities spanned a vast cultural landscape that included sacred sites, burial grounds, petroglyphs and ancient cliff dwellings. Many faith communities perceived the establishment of the Bears Ears National Monument as a game-changer for how tribes and the federal government could collaborate to respect and protect Indigenous heritage.

For this reason, many faith communities were outraged by the Trump Administration's unprecedented decision in December 2017 to initiate the most significant loss of conservation protections for our nation's antiquities ever known in U.S. history: The Trump Administration dramatically downsized both the Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments.

In keeping with many faith communities' values and priorities, we are eager to see the preservation of African American history in the proposed Camp Nelson and Medgar Evers National Monuments. Yet, the Trump Administration's proposal to use the Antiquities Act to protect these places invites skepticism and concern. Proposing new monument designations, while at the same time leading the most devastating loss of conservation protections for other national monuments, disrespects the communities who love and support these important sites, including and especially the Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, Ute Indian, and Ute Mountain Ute tribes.

Therefore, for these two designations, the Creation Justice community strongly supports a legislative path to ensuring new national monument designations will remain protected.

#### PROPOSED LEGISLATION

##### Camp Nelson (Kentucky)

HR: 5655  
Sponsor: Rep. Barr (R-KY-6)

S: 3287  
Sponsor: Sen. McConnell (R-KY)

##### Medgar Evers (Mississippi)

HR: 4895  
Sponsor: Rep. Thompson (D-MS-2)

S: 2889  
Sponsor: Sen. Wicker (R-MS)

**National monuments are an important part of our public lands system in which Americans learn, play, and pray.**

**The proposed Camp Nelson and Medgar Evers National Monuments reflect important parts of our shared American story.**

**We have a duty to future generations to preserve this heritage.**

# Quick Facts About Camp Nelson & Medgar Evers

Camp Nelson, located in Nicolasville, Kentucky, once served as a major Union supply depot and training center during the Civil War. After initially refusing to harbor freed men and women, Camp Nelson became home to a large community of formerly enslaved African Americans also known as contrabands.



Photo Credit: Camp Nelson

Camp Nelson served as one of the largest recruitment and training depots for United States Colored Troops (USCT). More than 23,000 African Americans from Kentucky served in the U.S. military and were recruited and trained at Camp Nelson during the Civil War.



Photo Credit: Camp Nelson

The history of Camp Nelson demonstrates the challenges formerly enslaved people faced to begin their lives as free men and women and the ambivalence the federal government demonstrated when dealing with large numbers of refugees from the slave system.

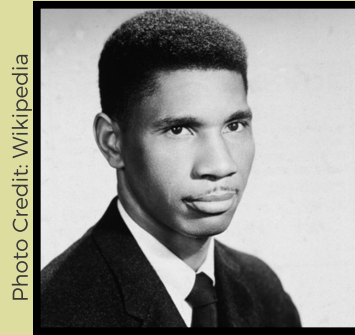


Photo Credit: Wikipedia

From serving his country in the fight against fascism during World War II, to advocating for racial equality during the Civil Rights Movement, Medgar Evers was a fighter and a visionary for change. His unwavering determination helped to

educate thousands of African Americans about their basic human rights and encouraged the fight for equality in Mississippi and across the country.

Medgar Evers was a major contributor in the advancement of the Civil Rights Movement both in Mississippi and nationwide. In life, he fought for and advanced the cause of civil rights in Mississippi. In death, he became a martyr for the movement encouraged others to take action, including President Johnson who championed the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Evers' courageous efforts must be honored and celebrated



Photo Credit: Civil Rights Trail

Mississippi became a major battle ground during the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s. Evers became one of the most visible civil rights leaders, subject to numerous threats and violent actions. Evers was assassinated in the driveway of his own home in Jackson, Mississippi on June 12, 1963 by a white supremacist.

The designation of Medgar Evers' home in Jackson, Mississippi as a national monument would not only help to preserve the legacy of this civil rights icon but also provide millions of people with the opportunity to learn about his honor and legacy, for decades to come.