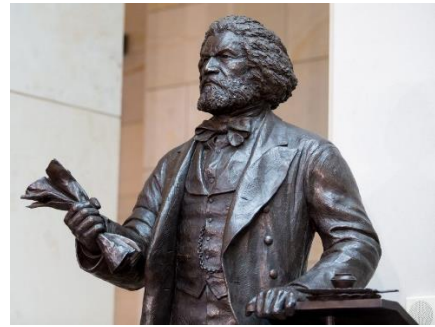


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Statues and cops: contradictions and questions

By Steve Bakke  July 12, 2020



Frederick Douglass

Two people painted over portions of a “Black Lives Matter” mural on a California street. Supporters of the mural, along with many public officials, demanded that this couple be brought to justice. Yet these same groups offered little apparent objection following the desecration or destruction of statues of National Anthem composer Francis Scott Key, former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, Union General Ulysses S. Grant, or President George Washington. Let’s acknowledge that contradiction.

Some supporters of indiscriminate destruction of statues wonder how anyone can attach importance to statues and monuments – after all, they’re just metal and stone. My response to that must echo their own: Why do they attach importance to destroying those metal and stone monuments if they’re so unimportant? Let’s acknowledge the symbolism for both sides.

Regarding police reform, we must learn from the past and do a better job in law enforcement, but not just because of the relatively modest numbers of cops killing unarmed blacks. In 2019 it was 15. In 2018, the U.S. total number of blacks killed by cops, both armed and unarmed, was 209. There are other measures relevant to determining a need for better policing. We should focus on those as well. And as we’re improving law enforcement, let’s work to find other even more significant causes of our cultural and racial tensions – they’re there. Let’s unite and get busy finding and fixing.