



**FRANK WHITE, JR.**  
Jackson County Executive

July 22, 2020

Veto Message from the County Executive

Ordinance 5374

TO THE JACKSON COUNTY LEGISLATURE:

I am returning herewith without my approval Ordinance 5374, which, most notably, proposes a question to voters on the November general election ballot authorizing the removal of Andrew Jackson statues located at Jackson County courthouses in Kansas City and Independence.

Since the tragic murder of George Floyd, I have been inspired by the courageous leadership of so many across our country. The acts demanding change have come from those young and old. They have come from men and women of all races and creeds. They have come from private citizens and elected officials alike. In one form or another, they all have stood up and said – Black Lives Matter.

I am saddened to say, in the days, weeks, and months that have followed the tragic murder of George Floyd, the Jackson County Legislature has not acted courageously. In fact, there has not even been a resolution of the Legislature condemning the horrific murder of George Floyd, nor a statement saying that Black Lives Matter in Jackson County. Even though last year, the very same Legislature unanimously passed a resolution celebrating the anniversary of a former slave plantation, and the year before that they passed a resolution in support of composting.

We must do better.

We must show our community that we are not afraid to confront the most serious of issues and take decisive action when it is right. I am hopeful that the passage of time has provided an opportunity for members of our Legislature to reflect on their vote and act differently. However, I am vetoing this Ordinance not just in the hopes that Legislators will reconsider their position, but also to allow them an opportunity to take a clear position.

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MARY JO SPIND  
COUNTY CLERK

2:45 pm



Members of the County Legislature  
Clerk of the Legislature  
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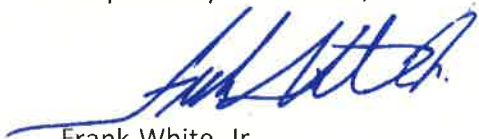
Even if Legislators ultimately decide to allow this issue to go to the voters, I am calling upon them to take a stand. As the recently deceased civil rights icon and Congressman John Lewis said just last year:

“When you see something that is not right, not just, not fair, you have a moral obligation . . . to do something. Our children and their children will ask us, ‘what did you do?’ . . . We have a mission and a mandate to be on the right side of history.”

These statues are no longer simply a vestige of the past. These are our statues now and I am giving you another opportunity to directly tell the residents of our community if you believe the statues should be taken down or not. If leaders in my birth state of Mississippi, the NFL team in Washington, D.C., even NASCAR have acknowledged and gotten rid of their hurtful imagery, Jackson County should too.

For the foregoing reasons, Ordinance 5374 has earned my veto.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank White, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Frank White, Jr.  
Jackson County Executive