



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patricia Fahy

Joint Statement from Senators Patricia Fahy and Jake Ashby and Assemblymembers John T. McDonald III and Gabriella A. Romero on the Renaming of Fort Johnson

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ALBANY, N.Y. – State Senators Patricia Fahy and Jake Ashby and Assemblymembers John T. McDonald, III, and Gabriella A. Romero released the following joint statement today:

"We are deeply disappointed by the decision to rename Fort Johnson as 'Fort Polk'. This change means the base will no longer honor Albany's own Sergeant Henry Johnson, a true

American hero and Medal of Honor recipient. Instead, it appears to be a thinly veiled attempt to preserve symbolic ties to a painful chapter of our nation's past. When the current federal administration began renaming military bases, we were concerned that this very outcome might occur. On National Medal of Honor Day earlier this year, we called on our federal government to retain the name of Fort Henry Johnson.

In yet another attempt to revise our nation's proud history, the implications of reverting to a name with such proximity to the original inspired by the Confederacy is an insult to Black Americans who have served this nation honorably. Sgt. Henry Johnson's legacy deserves full recognition. He embodied the very ideals of courage, sacrifice, and patriotism that our military installations should reflect. To erase and omit his name dishonors his memory and continues this administration's pattern of sidelining Black contributions to our nation's history.

The City of Albany community and elected officials have worked and advocated strenuously throughout the years to ensure that Sgt. Henry Johnson receives the well-deserved recognition that he did not receive during his lifetime for his bravery. This resulted in a posthumous Medal of Honor, Purple Heart, Distinguished Service Cross, and the renaming of Fort Johnson.

We strongly urge the Department of Defense to reconsider this decision and make it unequivocally clear whose legacy we are choosing to uplift. Sergeant Henry Johnson's legacy should be celebrated and revered, not relegated to the pages of history. We will continue to work to ensure that his legacy and service are not forgotten."

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