

What the Media Are Saying About the George Washington High School Murals

Over the past three months the media have published scores of articles, updates and opinions about the San Francisco School Board's plans to destroy or censor New Deal-era murals at George Washington High School. Here's a sampling. For more press coverage, go to: livingnewdeal.org/press/

"Why try to hide the reality of our history? "It's very ignorant and backward to think that you can erase history, erase reality by destroying art."

Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author

New York Times, August 21, 2019

"To destroy them or block them would be akin to book burning. We would be missing the opportunity for enhanced historic introspection this moment has provided us."

Danny Glover, Actor, who attended George Washington High in the 1960s.

San Francisco Chronicle, August 13, 2019

"In a democracy, destroying a work of art is never a solution to any offense it may give. Once art has been made and released into the often-choppy flow of life, it should stay there. It will live on anyway...Those favoring destruction think that they know what the art is about, and that they have the right to decide for everyone, not and in the future, what will be accessible, what will be known. But reactions to art are in constant flux, and the best art should contain multitudes of interpretations."

New York Times, July 26, 2019, Roberta Smith, co-chief art critic

"Would the school board next ban 'Huckleberry Finn' and 'To Kill a Mockingbird' for their depictions of racism? Perhaps poet Maya Angelou's 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' needs to go...She attended George Washington High School and apparently didn't suffer lifelong, debilitating emotional scars from walking past the mural. A book will survive in other libraries. A painting is singular. Once it's gone it can't be restored."

Editorial, *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat*, July 25, 2019

"It's one thing to remove memorials that celebrate or advance a false narrative about the past, such as the notion that the Civil War was about something other than defending slavery and white supremacy. But painting over murals that accurately reflect our history because the truth might offend viewers moves us in the wrong direction."

Editorial, *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 2019

“...as Henry Louis Gates is often quoted as saying, ‘Censorship is to art as lynching is to justice.’ Many have asked the school board to consider the educational legacy of their decision. How does it benefit students to tell them that they can close their eyes and ears to historical facts that may cause discomfort, or even horror? What more might they learn if they were taught to debate the issues—historical, artistic, political—rather than to sweep the questions under the rug?”

Charles Desmarais, art critic

San Francisco Chronicle, June 21, 2019

“The impulse to destroy troublesome art has become a crusade for those who imagine that revising history to suit their ideology is tantamount to revolution. Even the city’s art commission, whose mission is to promote and defend art has been AWOL...Instead of hiding history, let’s work to remember it more fully, warts, triumphs and all. The past, it has often been said, is a foreign country. We ought to know it better.”

Fergus M. Bordewich, Historian and author

Opinion, *Wall Street Journal*, April 26, 2019