

Plaskett Denounces Removal of Historical Markers at Virgin Islands National Park

Plaskett said the removal of markers documenting Taino heritage, enslavement, and climate science at Virgin Islands National Park under Executive Order 14253 denies Americans the “full truth” and erases painful but essential chapters of history.

Federal / **Published On February 16, 2026 07:16 AM /**

Staff Consortium **February 16, 2026**

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V.I. Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett has condemned what she describes as a sweeping federal directive that has led to the removal of historical markers at national parks across the country, including within the Virgin Islands National Park, where signs and exhibits documenting the territory’s history are being taken down, according to a release from Ms. Plaskett's office.

She says the directive stems from President Donald Trump's March 2025 Executive Order 14253, titled "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History." Ms. Plaskett said the order has resulted in the removal or modification of displays addressing Native American history, climate change, and the treatment of enslaved peoples at parks such as the Grand Canyon, Glacier, Big Bend, and Grand Teton.

In the Virgin Islands, the impact has reached the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John, which protects more than 7,000 acres and preserves historical and cultural landmarks that trace the territory's past. Among them are Taino archaeological sites documenting indigenous life and the ruins of sugar plantations that stand as testament to the forced labor of enslaved Africans who built the colonial economy.

Plaskett said the removal of these historical markers undermines efforts to preserve and teach the full history of the territory.

"The erasure of history does not change history—it only ensures we are condemned to repeat it. The Virgin Islands National Park preserves the history of our ancestors – from the indigenous peoples who first called these islands home to those who endured enslavement and built our communities through unimaginable hardship. These stories must be told accurately and completely so current and future generations understand where we come from and the lessons we must carry forward. The removal of these historical markers robs our children and all Americans of the truth they deserve.

"National parks serve as America's storytellers, with a responsibility to present our history accurately – the beautiful and the painful, the triumphs and the tragedies. Removing references to the displacement of indigenous peoples, the realities of enslavement, or the scientific evidence of climate change is not restoring truth. It is manufacturing a sanitized fiction that disrespects every American who deserves to know the full truth of our history.

"The Virgin Islands has never shied away from our history. We honor our ancestors by telling their stories truthfully, teach our children by acknowledging what came before, and protect our future by learning from our past. I have worked across the aisle to ensure our history is preserved— including passing bipartisan legislation to install a plaque at Ram Head commemorating the 1733 slave rebellion.

"I am engaging directly with the Department of the Interior and calling on the Administration to reverse these removals and restore accurate historical interpretation at the Virgin Islands National Park. I will continue fighting to ensure the Virgin Islands National Park preserves our complete history and supports St. John and the entire Virgin Islands—our land, people, culture, and future—for generations to come."