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July 28, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the July 3, 2020 Executive Order on Building and Rebuilding Monuments to American Heroes (EO). I would like to make a couple of recommendations as to your third question: any other American heroes who should be recognized in the American Garden of National Heroes.

The EO's criteria for statues for the National Garden includes "historically significant" American *artists*. EO, Section 3(c) (iii). The definition "historically significant American" means an individual who was, or became, an American citizen and was a public figure who made substantive contributions to America's public life or otherwise had a substantive effect on America's history. EO, Section 7. The starting list included in the EO, however, omits any painters, sculptors, musicians, or poets (only author Harriet Beecher Stowe is included from the arts). In addition to being a local elected official, I am a musician with a deep background in music history, and my recommendations for historically significant Americans in the field of American popular music are Bill Monroe and Bob Dylan.

William Smith Monroe, born in Rosine, Kentucky, lived from September 13, 1911 to September 9, 1996. He was an American mandolinist, singer, and songwriter, who created the style of music known as bluegrass, and is often called the "Father of Bluegrass." The genre takes its name from his band, the Blue Grass Boys, who named their group for the Kentucky bluegrass of Monroe's home state. Monroe's performing career spanned 69 years as a singer, instrumentalist, composer, and bandleader. He is the only member of four separate music Halls of Fame: the Country Music, Songwriters, and Rock and Roll Halls of Fame, and the Bluegrass Hall of Honor. Bluegrass music continues to evolve and make in-roads with younger generations, and is major cultural component in rural areas across the entire nation through the network of bluegrass festivals that began in the 1960's.

Bob Dylan, born Robert Allen Zimmerman on May 24, 1941, was born and raised in Duluth, Minnesota. Dylan is an American singer-songwriter, author, and visual artist who has been a major figure in popular culture for more than 50 years. Much of his most celebrated work dates from the 1960s, when songs such as "Blowin' in the Wind" and "The Times They Are A-Changing" became anthems for the civil rights and anti-war movements. His lyrics during this period incorporated a range of political, social, philosophical, and literary influences, defied pop music conventions and appealed to the burgeoning counterculture. Dylan's influence is profound and international in scope.

I believe Monroe and Dylan are towering American cultural figures who would make good additions to round out the artistic components of the proposed National Garden of Heroes. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these recommendations.

Very truly yours,

Tye Menser

Thurston County Commissioner, District 3