

May 22, 2022

Dr. Robert Garcia  
Mayor, City of Long Beach  
411 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

CC: Tom Modica (City Manager), Mary Zendejas, (First District), Cindy Allen (Second District), Suzie Price (Third District), Daryl Supernaw (Fourth District), Stacy Mungo (Fifth District), Suely Saro (Sixth District), Roberto Uranga (Seventh District), Al Austin (Eighth District), Rex Richardson (Ninth District), Tyler Bonanno-Curley (Manager, Government Affairs)

From: LACDMH American Indian/Alaska Native Underserved Cultural Communities Subcommittee  
Re: Lincoln Penny Monument

Dear Mayor Garcia,

This letter is put forth by the recommendations of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health American Indian/Alaska Native Underserved Cultural Communities subcommittee and its membership.

While we applaud the land acknowledgment put forth by the City Council of Long Beach, it is important for us as a body to address the Penny Monument that has been erected in Downtown Long Beach. Our position remains that historical and cultural monuments placed within the United States can and do often have an adverse effect on indigenous peoples. Specifically, the Lincoln Penny Monument is tied to a tragic history for Native Americans. President Lincoln committed three genocidal acts throughout the United States. These include the following acts: the Navajo long walk in New Mexico and Arizona, the San Cree massacre in Colorado, and the hanging of 38 + 2 Dakota men in Minnesota, which were all approved by President Lincoln. The continued erasure and the distorted moral narrative that has been displayed in the history of this country toward Native Americans unfortunately continues at all levels politically, socially, and economically.

As residents and as community members of Long Beach and greater Los Angeles County, we must acknowledge that there are over 160,000 Native Americans that call Los Angeles County and these cities their homes. We believe that the construction of this Monument has had and will continue to have adverse effects on the emotional and mental wellbeing of our community members.

We strongly recommend that the Monument be removed and replaced with a Monument to Toypurina, a Tongva/Kizh medicine woman who opposed colonial rule by Spanish Missionaries in California and was instrumental in the rebellion against the Mission San Gabriel in 1785.

To learn more, please visit the Change.org website: Lincoln Park: Ditch the Penny & Change the Name <https://chn.org/it/gkcxLSSZTD>.

Respectfully,

*Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood*

*Shannon Rivers*

Sylvia Gonzales-Youngblood, *Ohlone*

Shannon Rivers, *Akimel O'otham*

LACDMH AI/AN UsCC Co-Chairs

SGY/SR:kw