



"It's the tough times that really show what we're made of."

Susan Roberts, Vice President, Business Development Officer, Citibank

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### David Boaz

Executive VP, Cato Institute :

Gov. Bob McDonnell has issued a proclamation declaring April "Confederate History Month." As politicians often do with news they're not really publicizing, McDonnell posted the proclamation on his website Friday, but no one noticed until Tuesday. The proclamation urges Virginians to "understand the sacrifices of the Confederate leaders, soldiers and citizens during the period of the Civil War" but does not mention slavery.

Virginia's last Republican governor, Jim Gilmore, in issuing a proclamation remembering the Civil War, had at least acknowledged reality: "The practice of slavery was an affront to man's natural dignity, deprived African-Americans of their God given inalienable rights, degraded the human spirit and is abhorred and condemned by Virginians . . . Had there been no slavery, there would have been no war." Amazingly, he was criticized for that simple and obvious statement, as was I when I quoted it a few years back.

We shouldn't pretend history never happened, and the Confederacy is part of history. But so is the slave system that the Southern states seceded in order to maintain. In 1860 there were almost 500,000 slaves in Virginia, more than in any other state. Historical recollections of the Confederacy should not ignore that fact.

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