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State Senate calls for swapping Father Serra statue with one of Sally Ride



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April 13, 2015 (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/state-senate-calls-for-swapping-father-serra-statue-with-one-of-sally-ride/>) by Sally Ride Science (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/author/sally-ride-science-ucsd/>) · Posted in "In the Media (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/category/in-the-media/>)" ·

Sacramento, CA, April 13, 2015— A divided California state Senate voted Monday to request that the statue of Father Junipero Serra in the U.S. Capitol be replaced with one of NASA astronaut Sally Ride, the first American woman in space.

Each state can place statues of two of its important citizens in the Capitol. The likeness of the controversial Catholic priest, who created the California mission system and has been criticized for his treatment of native Americans, has been there since 1934. The other California statue is of former President Reagan.

Most Republicans opposed the resolution, by Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens), who said Ride would be the first California woman and known gay person in Statuary Hall and deserves the honor as the first American woman in space.

“She was a hero and she inspired girls and women to pursue their interest in math and science,” said another lawmaker, Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara). Ride died of cancer in 2013 at age 61.

Lara also called Ride a role model for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. “For the first time ever, LGBT youths will see themselves in Statuary Hall,” Lara said during the debate.

The issue of Serra’s effect on native peoples was not raised during the floor debate, but an analysis by legislative staff says, “Father Serra was ascetic and uncompromising in his zeal to convert Native Americans to Christianity and to make his missions self-sufficient.”

Opponents of the resolution noted that Serra helped establish California through the mission system and is up for possible sainthood.

“Removing his statue would be an affront to the people of California,” said Sen. Jeff Stone (R-Murrieta), “and it would be an insult to the tens of millions of Catholics that call California home.”

If the request to swap statues is approved by the Assembly and signed by the governor, it will go to the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress.

Article by Patrick McGreevy, LA Times

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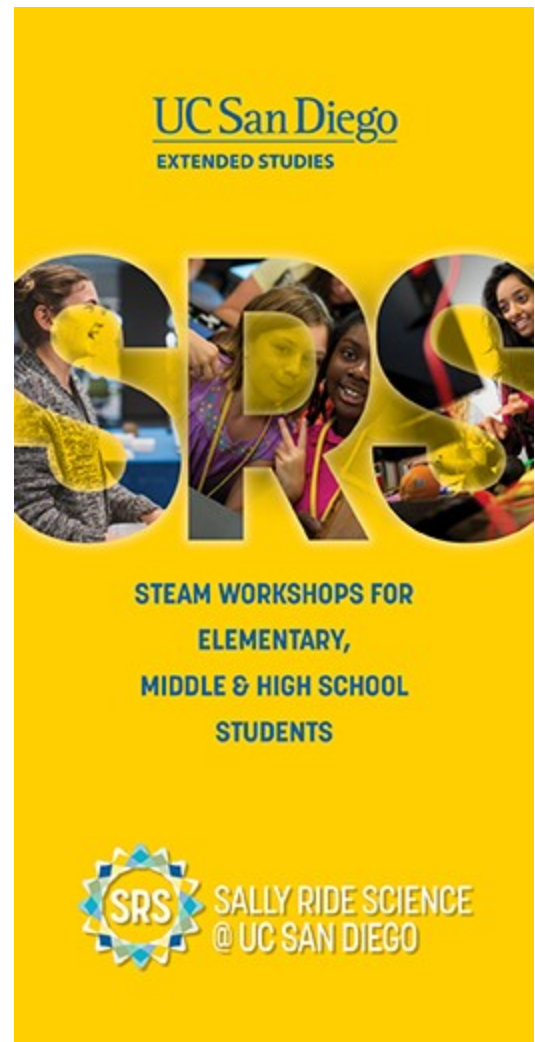
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[Google Doodle Celebrates Varied Facets of Sally Ride's Life and Work](https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/google-doodle-celebrates-varied-facets-of-sally-rides-life-and-work/) (https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/google-doodle-celebrates-varied-facets-of-sally-rides-life-and-work/) 👉

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