

ORDER

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 2-28-160 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is responsible for the implementation, review, and maintenance of the artwork for the Public Art Program; and

WHEREAS, during a recent hearing before the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs, and Recreation, the DCASE Commissioner provided City Council with an overview of the process for the removal of public artwork that may be considered controversial; and

WHEREAS, according to the Commissioner's testimony at that hearing, the process starts with the curator or creator of the art piece meeting with community representatives, organizations, elected officials, and other stakeholders that find the artwork controversial or offensive to explore resolutions, which may include covering the artwork in place, if feasible, to conceal the art from view; and

WHEREAS, then the Department hosts one or more community meetings, public conversations, or workshops so that the creator or curator of the artwork can address concerns and other feedback from the public; and

WHEREAS, according to the Commissioner's testimony, if no resolution has been reached between the creator or curator of the artwork and the relevant stakeholders, then the art piece may be removed from public display at the discretion of the Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, the process outlined by the Commissioner and DCASE staff is designed to incorporate concerns regarding allegedly controversial artworks balanced against the historic and artistic value of the work, filtered through a democratic process; and

WHEREAS, instead of following this balanced and democratic process, under the previous administration, multiple pieces of public artwork were removed from public display without following this process as described by the Commissioner, and without any meaningful public participation; and

WHEREAS, in fact, the "Chicago Monuments Project" – the non-City entity that made the decisions to remove the pieces of public artwork despite the requirement that the Public Art Program be administered by DCASE – has not met since January 2021, and is apparently defunct with no plans for future meetings more than three years later; and

WHEREAS, as eloquently and passionately expressed during the hearing, "limiting discourse [about allegedly controversial artwork] limits how we are able to communicate with one another" and when small groups of people decide to remove or censor art, it "can pressure other people to use that power to silence people ... the most anti-American thing that I can think of"; now, therefore

BE IT ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1. The Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and Special Events is hereby directed to take all necessary acts to cause the reinstallation of all statutes, monuments, or public artwork removed by the Chicago Monuments Project to previous public locations within 60 days.

SECTION 2. This order takes effect immediately upon passage.

ANTHONY V. NAPOLITANO
Alderman, 41st Ward

BRIAN HOPKINS
Alderman, 2nd Ward

MARTY QUINN
Alderman, 13th Ward

RAYMOND LOPEZ
Alderman, 15th Ward

SILVANNA TABARES
Alderman, 23rd Ward

MONIQUE SCOTT
Alderman, 24th Ward

FELIX CARDONA
Alderman, 31st Ward

NICOLAS SPOSATO
Alderman, 38th Ward

GILBERT VILLEGAS
Alderman, 36th Ward

BRENDAN REILLY
Alderman, 42nd Ward

JAMES GARDINER
Alderman, 45th Ward