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Confederate Statues in Washington, D.C., Set for Restoration Under Trump Executive Order

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Two Confederate statues in the Washington, D.C., area will be restored and returned to public display following President Donald J. Trump's recent executive order aimed at

preserving historical monuments. The move reverses removals made in recent years amid nationwide protests and debates over America's past.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced Tuesday that the Confederate memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, known as *The Reconciliation Monument*, will be reinstated. The statue, removed in 2023 following recommendations from a congressional commission, was unveiled in 1914 and depicts a bronze woman crowned with olive leaves atop a 32-foot pedestal, symbolizing the American South. The monument includes figures such as an enslaved man accompanying his owner to war and a Black woman referred to as "Mammy" holding the child of a white officer.

On Monday, the National Park Service (NPS) confirmed that the statue of Albert Pike, a Confederate brigadier general and senior Freemason leader, will return to its location in Judiciary Square, a short distance from the U.S. Capitol. Erected in 1901 through lobbying by Freemasons, the statue portrays Pike in civilian attire, per congressional approval. It has long been controversial as the only outdoor monument to a Confederate military officer in the nation's capital.

The Pike statue was torn down on June 19, 2020, during protests following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody. That summer saw widespread removal of Confederate statues across the United States, along with the renaming of military bases bearing Confederate leaders' names. The NPS stated the planned October restoration complies with federal historic preservation requirements and aligns with recent executive orders to "beautify the nation's capital and reinstate pre-existing statues."

Hegseth criticized the original removal, writing on social media that the Arlington statue "never should have been taken down by woke lemmings," and emphasized that preserving monuments is about honoring history, not erasing it.

President Trump's March executive order, *Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History*, condemned post-2020 efforts to reinterpret U.S. history, arguing they deepen divisions and encourage national shame. The order directs the Interior Department to restore any monument or display altered "to perpetuate a false reconstruction of

American history” or influenced by “partisan ideology.”

The decision has drawn opposition from some local officials. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Washington’s non-voting delegate, labeled the Pike statue’s return “odd and indefensible” and pledged to introduce legislation moving it to a museum.

“Confederate statues should be preserved as historical artifacts,” she said, “but not displayed in public spaces where they imply honor.”

The restorations are set to be completed in the coming months, marking a significant step in the federal government’s ongoing effort to protect and reinstate historical monuments.