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Statues and Their Symbolism

While Madison seems far away from us at times, its actions still affect us. As our capitol city, we expect it to be well taken care of and well protected. That's why it came as quite a shock to see reports on the news last month that the Lady Forward and Colonel Hans Christian Heg statues had been viciously torn down by rioters.

The rioters claim the reason these statues came down was because they are inherent 'racist symbols.' Except there are several problems with this claim, Colonel Heg was a staunch abolitionist who fought and died trying to free the slaves. Lady Forward, which is also our state's motto, was made and placed at the capitol building to celebrate and commemorate that Wisconsin was the first state in the union to acknowledge women's right to vote. As of today, we still have not recovered Colonel Heg's head or spur from his boot, however, a new statue will be made from a statue of him that is in the Racine area. As for Lady Forward, the original is still in the Historical Society and will be recast.

What most people also don't realize is many of the capitol planters were also smashed and have since been removed to a secure location as well. Even the Wisconsin Veterans Museum was tagged with tons of spray paint, I can say as of August 6th that it has started to be cleaned off to preserve our veteran's memories and to show them respect they deserve.

Rightfully, the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board, which is bipartisan, approved a plan to move forward with restoring the statues and reinstalling them on the capitol grounds. The Historical Society will be able to set up a donation account to help cover the cost of this project and hopefully we will see them back on the square soon. Although I hope the people who committed these crimes are caught and are held accountable for their actions and contribute to the reconstruction efforts.

While these statues may have been torn down, the rioters missed the third statue, Wisconsin, which stands tall and strong on the top of the people's house. It serves as symbol for how we should act and stand tall against violence.

As always, feel free to contact my office with questions, comments, or concerns.

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