

# White House says it will not return the Statue of Liberty to France

A French politician said the U.S. no longer deserved the legendary monument.

By **Danny Nguyen**  
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The Trump administration will not entertain a French politician's request to return the Statue of Liberty to France.

"Absolutely not. My advice to that unnamed low-level French politician would be to remind them that it's only because of the United States of America that the French are not speaking German right now," said White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt in a press briefing Monday, likely referencing an American-French allyship during World War II that snuffed out Nazi Germany. "They should be grateful."

The statement comes a day after a French member of the European Parliament, Raphaël Glucksmann, said at a party convention that America under the Trump administration [no longer embodied](#) the spirit of the monument, which France gifted the U.S. in the 1880s to formalize diplomatic ties and enshrine the concept of American independence from Great Britain and the end of slavery.

"We're going to say to the Americans who have chosen to side with the tyrants, to the Americans who fired researchers for demanding scientific freedom: 'Give us back the Statue of Liberty,'" Glucksmann said.

The Department of Health and Human Services has purged thousands of scientists and public health leaders since the beginning of the second Trump administration. It has also slashed research grants across the country, and industry experts warn these moves could hollow out research institutes that rely on these funds for maintenance and daily operations.

If the United States doesn't intend to restore these positions and funds, France, Glucksmann said, would gladly absorb the United States' research sector.

It's unclear how France would force the Trump administration's hand. The country cannot take the statue back at its whim because it is the property of the U.S. government. Such a move could also strain diplomatic tensions that French President Emmanuel Macron is trying to soothe with President Donald Trump by brokering a peace deal to end a yearslong war between Russia and Ukraine.