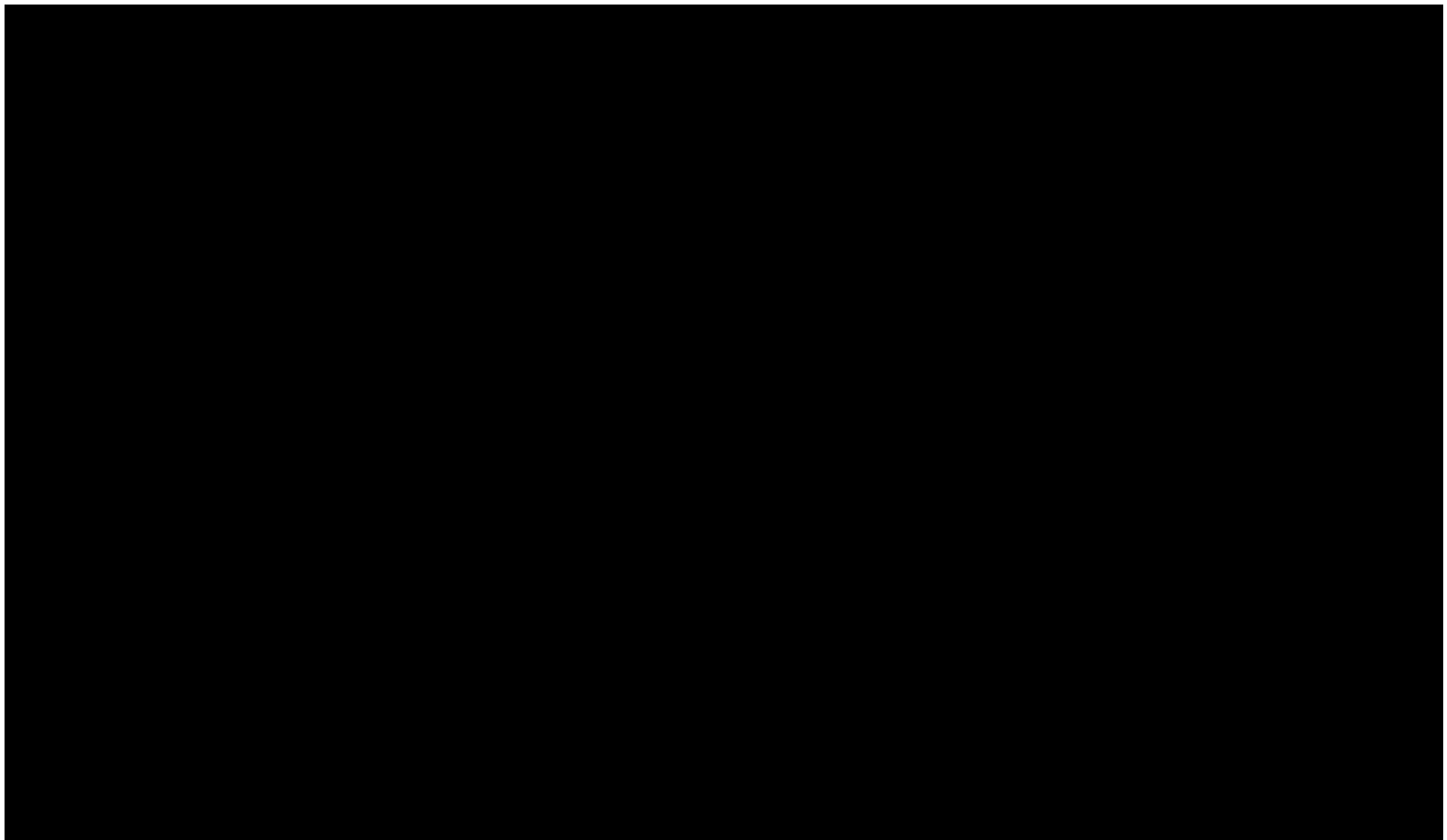


U.S.

ARTIST TO MOVE SCULPTURE CRITICIZING TRUMP FROM CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY AS PART OF SETTLEMENT

BY **JENNI FINK** ON 5/6/19 AT 4:27 PM EDT



Over a year after sculptor Billie Lawless added a message targeting President Donald Trump to his sculpture, he agreed to move it off the Cleveland State University campus as part of a censorship lawsuit settlement.

The Politician: A Toy is a 42-foot sculpture designed to present satirical views of politicians and was first displayed on campus in 2008. In March 2018, Lawless updated the sculpture with the phrase, “Build a wall of pussies,” in reference to Trump’s campaign promise to build a wall along the southern border and a comment he made to *Access Hollywood* in 2005. After removing it for routine repairs in April 2018, he reinstalled it in October.

This isn’t the first time Trump-inspired artwork stirred controversy and in April, a piece of artwork critical of the president was removed from a New Jersey exhibit.



As part of a censorship lawsuit settlement, Cleveland State University agreed to pay Billie Lawless \$50,000 and Lawless agreed to move his sculpture off the campus property.

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In response to Lawless' October addition to the sculpture, the university covered the phrase with a vinyl banner, prompting him to file a suit alleging they breached the contract and violated his First Amendment rights. The banner was removed in early February in accordance with preliminary settlement terms, according to a [press release](#) from Pattakos Law Firm, who represented Lawless.

On Thursday, the two parties finalized the settlement agreement, which required the university to pay the artist \$50,000. Lawless agreed to move the sculpture to a different location by July 24.

In a joint statement, Cleveland State University and Lawless thanked each other for the 10-year relationship and said the dispute was resolved amicably.

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The October update wasn't the first time Lawless added to the sculpture and according to the lawsuit, he would periodically update the text to comment on current political dialogue. In 2012, he added the words, "Obama scare," which the lawsuit said the university never covered or complained about to him. Those words were taken down in June 2013. Other messages that were posted on the sculpture over the years were "Law and borders" and "a thousand points of slight," which was a play on former George H.W. Bush, who said a "thousand points of light."

"Lawless has continuously updated the sculpture with commentary on controversial issues, and only now, in response to his timely criticism of President Trump, has CSU acted to censor it," Lawless' attorney Andy Geronimo [said](#) in January.

Founded in 1964, Cleveland State University is a public research institution located in Cleveland, Ohio. The campus is home to over 17,000 students and more than 175 academic programs.

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