

Good evening.

My name is **Kristopher Reichert**. I grew up in Arizona and have called the Washington region home for the past eight years.

I was raised in the tradition of Barry Goldwater, John McCain, and Jeff Flake, Republicans who believed conservatism was defined not by loyalty to a person, but by fidelity to constitutional principles. Today, I consider myself an Eisenhower Independent because I believe that kind of principled, steady leadership is becoming increasingly difficult to find in either political party.

I am here to oppose the proposed Monumental Arch.

Not simply because of who occupies the White House today, but because of what this proposal signals to every administration that follows.

One of the enduring traditions of the American republic has been restraint in elevating sitting presidents through permanent national monuments and civic symbolism. Our greatest memorials emerged through time, public consensus, and history's judgment, not the preferences of those holding office.

That tradition reflects a fundamental American principle: our institutions, our symbols, and our nation are larger than any one individual.

History reminds us that governments centered on strong personalities often intertwine the identity of the state with the identity of the leader through monuments, architecture, and civic symbolism. We saw it in Stalin's Soviet Union, Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, Mao's China, and countless other authoritarian regimes. America has always sought to be different. We rejected kings. We rejected personality cults. We built a republic where the Constitution, not a single individual, is meant to endure.

I will acknowledge that restoring monuments and fountains throughout our capital is a worthwhile goal. But restoration cannot stop at the surface.

Fresh paint, restored fountains, and polished stone are welcome, but they remain cosmetic if we ignore the deeper work of strengthening the institutions, civic trust, and democratic norms that made those monuments worth building in the first place.

The greatness of our capital has never come from marble alone. It comes from the principles it represents.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, ***"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."***

No administration, regardless of party, should claim the privilege of permanently reshaping America's monumental core without first demonstrating the principled restraint that has defined our Republic for nearly 250 years.

I respectfully ask the Commission to reject this proposal.

Thank you.