

Governor Janet Mills,

I am asking you to correct your messaging regarding the Statue of Liberty, immigration, and Emma Lazarus's *The New Colossus*. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from **France** to the United States and was dedicated in **1886**. Its original meaning was connected to **liberty, the relationship between France and the United States, national identity and ideals associated with the American founding**, while its design incorporated artistic influences from **Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and French traditions**. Lazarus wrote *The New Colossus* in **1883**, but the poem was not placed on the pedestal until **1903**, seventeen years after the statue was dedicated. The **Bolshevik Party emerged the same year, in 1903**, and the Bolshevik Revolution occurred in 1917, long after Lazarus's lifetime.

There is also a documented history of **Bolshevik, Communist, and Marxist activism** attempting to reinterpret American political traditions through revolutionary ideas, including the American Revolution and the Constitution. The Communist Party even used the slogan **"Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism."** These later political movements do not erase the much older histories and cultures of Native peoples, early American communities, and generations of Americans who built communities here over centuries.

America is not simply a "nation of any immigrants." America has deep histories, cultures, communities, boundaries, and traditions that deserve to be protected, respected, and preserved. **Please correct your messaging and recognize the differences between the original meaning of the Statue of Liberty, the later Lazarus inscription, American constitutional traditions, and later political movements that sought to redefine them. American heritage matters. American communities matter. Our history means everything to the American people and it is important that we never erase or change its true meaning.**