

Liberty Watch

Illinois Court Rules Decalogue Monument Constitutional

The U.S. Court of Appeals of the 7th Circuit ruled in January that the City of LaCrosse, Ill.'s sale of a piece of land on which a Ten Commandments monument sits was constitutional, the La Crosse Tribune reported. The monument, donated to the city by the Fraternal Order of Eagles in 1965, was located in a public park for years. When the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed suit alleging the statue violated the separation of church and state, the city sold the land on which the monument sits to the Eagles. The site is fenced in, and there are signs noting the land is private property, but the foundation still refused to withdraw its case. The appeals court ruled 2-1 that the fence and signs are sufficient for reasonable passers-by to recognize the land as private property. Opponents of the decision may appeal to the Supreme Court, the Tribune said.

Virginia Lawmakers May Consider Gay Marriage Ban

Republicans in Virginia's General Assembly are preparing resolutions requesting an amendment to the state's constitution limiting marriage to heterosexual couples only, The Washington Post reported. The ban on same-sex marriage would be similar to the ones passed in 11 states Nov. 2. Legislators in Maryland and Kansas also are likely to take up the issue this year, the newspaper said. So far, 17 states have constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage.

Court Denies Case on Gay Adoption Ban

On Jan. 10 the Supreme Court refused to hear a challenge to a Florida law banning gay adoption, the Los Angeles Times reported. Enacted in 1977, the law prohibits gays and lesbians from adopting, though homosexuals are permitted to serve as foster parents. Lawyers said the state encourages singles to adopt and permits former drug abusers and ex-offenders to adopt children, the Times reported. The high court gave no reason for refusing the case. Mathew Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, said the ban on gay adoption "serves the legitimate purpose of preserving the traditional model of the family."