

Charismatic Senator Responds to Satanic Offensive Against the Capitol

The Satanic Temple will hold a rally today in protest of the Ten Commandments display at the Arkansas state capitol.

The rally "is intended to bring together religious leaders of different faiths to discuss the importance of the First Amendment and its protection for religious pluralism," the group said in a news release.

The statue will be erected from 1-3 p.m. local time.

The United States Constitution guarantees the rights of all American citizens to express their political opinions, to peacefully assemble and to petition their government. The first amendment in our Bill of Rights states specifically that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. I hold these rights very dear and will always defend the rights of American citizens, even when we may disagree.

The essential right to freedom of speech also ensures that the voice of the people of Arkansas and our great state may be heard as well. Though our state is being visited today by outsiders who clearly choose to travel around the nation uplifting the profane and proclaiming extremely unorthodox views, rest assured that though we respect their right to free speech, they must also respect our right to disagree with them and repudiate their false claims.

The Constitution also protects the rights of the people to

elect legislators to govern on their behalf, with their consent. The legislature carried out the will of the citizens of Arkansas when it overwhelmingly approved Act 1231 of 2015. State legislators responded to the will of Arkansans by passing the Arkansas Ten Commandments Monument Act, and our governor signed the bill into law. I have confidence in the Arkansas attorney general to successfully defend the law in state and federal courts.

Due process was followed to the letter of the law when the secretary of state and the Capitol Arts and Grounds Commission held a series of open and public meetings to gather input on the placing of the Ten Commandments monument. The process allowed citizens to participate in the implementation of Act 1231. The extremist group that has targeted our state again today came and spoke against the monument during our public meetings and sought for a sponsor of a bill to erect their profane statue—they never had any takers. The process was open, and they failed to convince any of the 135 legislators to sponsor a bill to carry out their idea.

The people of Arkansas have exercised their rights to place a monument on the state Capitol grounds, which honors the influence of the Ten Commandments as a historical and moral foundation of law. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld this same right in 2005 for the people of Texas in *Van Orden v. Perry* when it held that an exact replica of the Ten Commandments monument which we have on our Capitol grounds was appropriate in the state of Texas. I have personally visited the Ten Commandments monuments located on the Capitol grounds of Colorado and Arizona, and I am told Missouri also has a Ten Commandments monument somewhere on its Capitol grounds. Many times I have entered the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., and personally taken photographs of the Ten Commandments engraved on the doors entering the court chamber and beheld Moses engraved above the chair in which the chief justice sits. If the display of the Ten Commandments is

appropriate for the U.S. Supreme Court and these other states, it is also appropriate for the good people of Arkansas.

Our rights to build a monument were exercised through the electoral and legislative processes and have been upheld by the judicial system. They are no less sacred than the freedoms of a shrill few, for whom legal and political rights are merely methods to fleece the gullible and entertain the cynical.

No matter what these extremists may claim, it will be a very cold day in hell before an offensive statue will be forced upon us to be permanently erected on the grounds of the Arkansas State Capitol. Our Supreme Court ruled in the 2009 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Pleasant Grove v. Summum* that no group can force a government body to do such a thing.

I pledge to all Arkansans that we will defend the will of the Arkansas people and the honor of our great state. It was my honor to sponsor the bill which led to passage of the Arkansas Ten Commandments Monument Act, and I hope to help every state in our nation do the same if they wish to do so. {eo}

Senator Jason Rapert is the owner and president of Rapert Financial & Associates Inc. in Conway. He is also the president and founder of Holy Ghost Ministries Inc. of Arkansas, a faith-based humanitarian mission organization with projects in Ghana, West Africa, and the Philippines. Since 2004, he has served in the mission field eight times and has led several mission teams to Africa. He is an ordained minister and speaks around the country on faith, Judeo-Christian values and religious liberty.

A lifelong resident of Arkansas, Senator Rapert earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Central Arkansas. In 2013, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Theology by the Midwest College of Theology for his efforts to uphold biblical values.