

Liberty Watch

Christian Groups Applaud President's Supreme Court Nominee

Christian organizations praised President Bush's choice of John Roberts Jr. to fill the Supreme Court seat being vacated by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Described as a "strict constructionist," Roberts, 50, has served as a federal judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit for the last two years and has argued conservative positions on abortion and public school prayer at graduation ceremonies before the high court during his years as a lawyer. Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, said Roberts "is exceptionally well qualified ... and has a judicial temperament that is respected by all who deal with him." Ohio pastor Rod Parsley, founder of the Center for Moral Clarity, said Bush's choice "sends a clarion call to return our country to the principles of its Founding Fathers." He also encouraged Christians to pray that Roberts "would be on the bench on Oct. 3, when the court is back in session." Roberts' confirmation hearings were to begin in August.

Oklahoma Zoo Nixes Creationism Exhibit

A Tulsa, Okla., city board rejected plans July 7 to add a creationism exhibit to the Tulsa Zoo, the Associated Press (AP) reported. The 3-1 vote, made during a special board meeting, reversed a June 7 decision to add a Genesis story to the zoo. Tulsa resident Dan Hicks, who lobbied for the exhibit, said the creationism display would balance other religious items at the zoo, which he said include a globe sculpture that promotes pantheism and a Maasai display that contains the equivalent of posting Scripture. Dale McNamara,

who voted against the exhibit, said the zoo should develop displays that explain the cultural significance of animals. She said an elephant-like stone statue near the elephant exhibit, which Hicks said depicts a Hindu god, fit within that mission, the AP said. Tulsa Mayor Bill LaFortune was the only board member to support the creation exhibit.

Christians decry high court decision

Christian groups say the Supreme Court's recent ruling in favor of using eminent domain for development that would increase a city's tax base may make churches and other tax-exempt organizations vulnerable to land seizures. Several legal experts say various state and federal laws, as well as the First Amendment, make it almost impossible for churches to be targeted for condemnation, the New York Times reported. But the American Family Association, Focus on the Family and the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) all warned that the ruling puts churches at risk. In June, the ACLJ announced a petition campaign in support of the Protection of Homes, Small Businesses, and Private Property Act of 2005.