

43 State Capitols Celebrate Christmas with Public Displays of the Savior's Birth

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Celebrations of the Savior's birth are scheduled with 43 state capitol nativity scenes across America this Christmas. The Thomas More Society and the American Nativity Scene are helping a growing number of private citizen groups across the nation to display Biblical manger scenes on government property this Christmas. State capitols in Alaska, New York, Utah and Virginia are scheduled to feature the traditional display of the holy family with baby Jesus in the manger for the first time this year.

Ed O'Malley, President of the American Nativity Scene, observed, "In 2022 we are pleased to announce that 43 state capitol nativity scenes, the most to date, are scheduled to be erected at state capitols this Christmas season."

"The message of hope delivered by the baby Jesus celebrates the joy of new life," shared O'Malley. "This troubled world can benefit from more hope and more joy."

The American Nativity Scene works closely with attorneys at the Thomas More Society to make sure that those desiring to sponsor a State Capitol Nativity Scene can do so, as allowed by law.

"Many erroneously assume that government entities are prohibited from allowing a religious display," explained Thomas More Society Vice President and Senior Counsel Thomas Olp. "The law is clear. Government entities may erect and

maintain celebrations of the Christmas holiday—or allow citizens to do so on government property, including nativity scenes, as long as a crèche’s sole purpose is not to promote its religious content, and it is placed in context with other symbols of the season as part of an effort to celebrate the public Christmas holiday through traditional symbols. We pray that the nativity scenes of the Christmas season will help to foster a sense of unity and peace on earth.”

Tom Brejcha, Thomas More Society President and Chief Counsel, echoes the importance of displaying the nativity scenes, especially in times of social or political controversy. He stated, “The Christmas message highlights the inherent dignity of each and every human being.”

Pro-bono work by the attorneys at the Thomas More Society ensures that citizens who privately fund religious displays on public property are accorded their right to do so as guaranteed by the 1st and 14th Amendments of the United States Constitution. A permanent federal injunction banning discrimination against religious speech assures that the Christmas crèches are protected from erroneous applications of the widely misunderstood concept of “separation of church and state.”

The following state capitols featured a nativity scene in 2021: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Additionally, for Christmas 2022, state capitols are scheduled to feature nativity displays for the first time in Alaska, New York, Utah, and Virginia. {eoa}

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The American Nativity Scene is dedicated to the display of nativity scenes in every state capitol in America during the Christmas season. The committee ships nativity scenes, which have been donated by an anonymous benefactor, to citizens throughout the United States who wish to give witness to the true meaning of Christmas by setting up a privately funded crèche in a public forum.