

Oklahoma Capitol Given 13 Days to Remove Holy Monument

An Oklahoma commission voted on Tuesday to remove a privately funded granite monument of the Ten Commandments from the State Capitol grounds, after a judge ordered its removal by Oct. 12.

The Capitol Preservation Commission, which oversees art displays in public spaces, voted 7-1 to authorize the Office of Management and Enterprise Services to remove the monument.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court in June had ordered the monument, which was erected in 2012, removed because the state constitution bans the use of state property for the benefit of a religion.

A judge earlier this month gave Oklahoma until Oct. 12 to remove the 6-foot-tall () monument, denying a request from state Attorney General Scott Pruitt to leave it in place. The monument has strong support of Oklahoma's Republican leadership.

John Estus, a spokesman for the Office of Management and Enterprise Services, said it was unclear where the monument would be placed.

Oklahoma Representative Mike Ritze, a Republican, paid \$10,000 to erect the monument, which sparked petitions from other groups for room to place their own monuments on Capitol grounds including New York-based Satanists and the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

The state Supreme Court's ruling in June prompted some conservative legislators to look at impeaching the justices or amending the Oklahoma Constitution. {eoa}

