

Oklahoma Puts Freeze on Monkey God, Satanic Monuments

Oklahoma has put a halt to new monuments at its Capitol after groups petitioned to have markers for Satan, a monkey god and a spaghetti monster erected near a large stone tablet inscribed with the **Ten Commandments**.

The Oklahoma Capitol Preservation Commission voted on Thursday to ban new monuments on statehouse grounds until a court battle is settled with the American Civil Liberties Union, which is seeking the removal of the **Ten Commandments**, local media reported.

Commission officials were not immediately available for comment on Friday.

The Oklahoma branch of the ACLU this year sued to have the Old Testament monument removed, saying the state should not be in the business of legitimizing religion and that the precedent could result in a spectacle of religion. No decision has been reached in the case.

Socially conservative Christian groups fought for years to have the **Ten Commandments** displayed at the statehouse, and the monument went up in 2012.

Legislative approval was granted to the Christian groups, who were using private funds to commemorate what they said was a historical event. The legislature and the groups said they were not in violation of constitutional restrictions on the state sponsoring religion.

Legal experts said this opened the door for other groups to use this model to petition for placing their monuments on the capitol's grounds. After the ACLU filed suit, the Satanist group filed an application with the state to place its

monument on capitol grounds.

Other groups that have applied include a Hindu group looking to set up a monument to a monkey god, an animal welfare group wanting to set up a monument to world peace and one to honor the satirical church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

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