

SCOTUS Rules Cross Can Be Displayed on Public Land

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday threw out a lower court ruling that declared that a 34-foot (10 meters) Christian cross standing on public land in Pensacola, Florida violated the U.S. Constitution's ban on government endorsement of religion.

The justices sent the case back to the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in light of the high court's June 20 ruling in a similar case in which it upheld the constitutionality of a 40-foot-tall (12 meters) cross-shaped war memorial on public land in Maryland.

The high court's 7-2 ruling said that long-standing monument was permissible under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, which calls for the separation of church and state. The justices were divided over whether other types of religious displays and symbols on government property would be allowed.

A cross in Pensacola has stood on the site in Bayview Park since 1941, although the most recent version was erected in 1969. At times the site has been used for Easter services.

In a September 2018 ruling, the Atlanta-based court said the Pensacola law was unconstitutional, citing its own precedents on the issue.

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