

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Attorney General Jeff Landry Fights to Save Veterans Memorial

BATON ROUGE, LA – Attorney General Jeff Landry this week joined a bipartisan group of 25 Attorneys General in fighting to protect a historic cross honoring World War I veterans as part of a case with much broader First Amendment implications.

“Throughout our nation’s history, veterans memorials have constitutionally used religious imagery to honor the brave men and women of the military who have given the ultimate sacrifice for our country,” said Attorney General Jeff Landry. “In the military, a cross indicates both death and bravery: a cross is the mark of heroism – for example, on the Army’s Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Army’s Combat Medical Badge, and the Americal Division’s insignia.”

“As a veteran, I stand with millions of others in eternal gratitude and respect for the departed’s military service,” added Attorney General Jeff Landry. “To remove veterans memorials would dishonor their sacrifice and create the very kind of religiously based divisiveness that the Establishment Clause seeks to avoid.”

Louisiana and 24 other states filed a friend of the court brief asking the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to affirm a district court’s ruling, which found the U.S. Constitution allows veterans memorials with religious symbolism.

The case at hand involves a white, memorial cross in Bladensburg, Maryland that was built by the American Legion to remember World War I veterans. The initial lawsuit sought to force Maryland to tear down the historic cross.

The district court found Maryland’s cross to be protected by the First Amendment. An appeal followed and the case rests before the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Its ultimate decision could impact memorials in West Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia – including those at Arlington National Cemetery.

Attorney General Jeff Landry signed the brief with West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey and attorneys general from Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The brief was filed as part of American Humanist Association, et. al. v. Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. A copy can be viewed at <http://1.usa.gov/1XsRzJN>.

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