



Bladensburg, MD World War I Veterans Memorial (Photo credit: First Liberty Institute. May be republished.)

THE AMERICAN LEGION ASKS FOURTH CIRCUIT TO PROTECT NINETY-YEAR-OLD VETERANS MEMORIAL

On behalf of The American Legion, Jones Day and First Liberty Institute file their brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in defense of the Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial

BLADENSBURG, MD, April 5, 2016 – Yesterday, Jones Day and First Liberty Institute filed a brief for The American Legion with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, asking the court to uphold the constitutionality of the Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial. Read the brief: firstliberty.org/bladensburg

Law firms Jones Day and First Liberty Institute represent The American Legion, the largest veterans service organization in the country with approximately 2.2 million members, which erected the monument 90 years ago in honor of Bladensburg-area men who gave their lives in the First World War. The law firms won the lawsuit on behalf of the Legion at the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland when the court upheld the constitutionality of the monument.

Following the district court's ruling, the American Humanist Association appealed the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. The group alleges that the cross-shaped memorial violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, and demands that the monument be demolished, altered or removed.

In The American Legion's brief, Jones Day and First Liberty Institute attorneys argue the cross is an internationally recognized symbol honoring men who gave their lives in World War I. The Bladensburg Memorial was designed to commemorate the lives of the local men who fell in the War, mirroring the cross-shaped grave markers used overseas for those who died in World War I.

Noel Francisco, lead counsel for The American Legion and chair of Jones Day's Government Regulation Practice, says, "This cross was erected to honor local American heroes who gave their lives in World War I. It complies with the law in every respect and should stay right where it is. Tearing it down would lead to the very religious divisiveness the Founders intended to avoid when they wrote the First Amendment."

Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty Institute, says, "The American Humanist Association is using the First Amendment to attack a ninety-year-old veterans memorial simply because it is in the shape of a cross. That is sad and that is not the law. We must protect these memorials and other monuments that honor our nation's military heroes."

Read more about the case: firstliberty.org/bladensburg

About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](https://firstliberty.org) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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