



Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial

Historic war memorial's constitutionality challenged in humanist lawsuit

The Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial was erected in 1925 by a local post of The American Legion to honor 49 servicemen of Prince George's County, Maryland, who died in World War I. However, almost 90 years later, the American Humanist Association (AHA) sued, challenging the constitutionality of the memorial due to its cross shape.

This possibility was mentioned twice during oral arguments held on December 7, 2016, before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. In the first exchange, a Fourth Circuit judge suggested "tak[ing] the arms off," to which a lawyer for the AHA responded that a "modification" of the memorial cross could "absolutely" be "equitable." The transcript excerpt is below:

Judge: Or, take the arms off.

Monica Miller: I think that a modification ...

Judge: That might be a ...

Monica Miller: Yeah absolutely could be an equitable ...

Judge: ... compromised position.

Listen to the audio [here](#), and read the full transcript [here](#).

The judge brought up "chopping the arms off" again later. First Liberty volunteer attorney Chris DiPompeo of the law firm Jones Day responded:

Judge: What about Judge Winn's suggestion of converting this back to private property, or my suggestion of chopping the arms off.

Chris DiPompeo: So, with respect to the second, chopping the arms off, I think that would completely disfigure the memorial and then ...

Listen to the audio [here](#), and read the full transcript [here](#).

To learn more about the case, visit www.FirstLiberty.org/Bladensburg.