

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 11, 2009

House Bill No. 1330

HOUSE BILL NO. 1330 - By: RITZE of the House and BROGDON of the Senate.

An Act relating to the state capital and Capitol Building; providing for legislative findings; creating the Ten Commandments Monument Display Act; authorizing the placement of a monument displaying and honoring the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the Oklahoma State Capitol; authorizing the Secretary of State to work with certain persons in designing a monument; providing for the location for the monument; authorizing the Attorney General to defend certain challenges; providing for codification providing for noncodification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

- 1 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be codified in the
- 2 Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:
- 3 The Legislature finds:
- 4 1. That the Ten Commandments found in the Bible, Exodus 20:1-17 and
- 5 Deuteronomy 5:6-21, are an important component of the moral foundation of the laws
- 6 and legal system of the United States of America and of the State of Oklahoma;
- 7 2. That the courts of the United States of America and of various states frequently
- 8 cite the Ten Commandments in published decisions;
- 9 3. That the Ten Commandments represent a philosophy of government held by
- 10 many of the founders of this nation and by many Oklahomans and other Americans
- 11 today, that God has ordained civil government and has delegated limited authority to

1 civil government, that God has limited the authority of civil government, and that God
2 has endowed people with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the
3 pursuit of happiness;

4 4. That in order that they may understand and appreciate the basic principles of
5 the American system of government, the people of the United States and of the State of
6 Oklahoma need to identify the Ten Commandments, one of many sources, as influencing
7 the development of what has become modern law; and

8 5. That the placing of a monument to the Ten Commandments on the grounds of
9 the Oklahoma State Capitol would help the people of the United States and of Oklahoma
10 to know the Ten Commandments as the moral foundation of law.

11 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma
12 Statutes as Section 10.1 of Title 73, unless there is created a duplication in numbering,
13 reads as follows:

14 A. This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Ten Commandments
15 Monument Display Act”.

16 B. The Oklahoma Secretary of State or designee is hereby authorized to permit and
17 arrange for the placement on the State Capitol grounds of a suitable monument
18 displaying and honoring the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments monument
19 shall use the same words used on the monument at issue in *Von Orden v. Perry*, that the
20 United States Supreme Court ruled constitutional. This monument shall be designed,
21 constructed, and placed on the Capitol grounds by private entities at no expense to the
22 State of Oklahoma. The Secretary of State or designee is authorized to assist private

1 entities in selecting a location for the monument and arranging a suitable time for its
2 placement.

3 C. In the event that the legality or constitutionality of the Ten Commandments
4 monument is challenged in a court of law, the Oklahoma Attorney General or designee is
5 hereby authorized to prepare and present a legal defense of the monument and shall
6 work with any legal services provider, if any designated by the Legislature.

7 D. The placement of this monument shall not be construed to mean that the State
8 of Oklahoma favors any particular religion or denomination thereof over others, but
9 rather will be placed on the Capitol grounds where there are numerous other
10 monuments.

11 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2009.

12 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT, dated 02-
13 10-09 - DO PASS, As Coauthored.