



State Legislators Push For 'Bill of Rights' Monument On Capitol Grounds

BY GRANT HERMES, NEWS 9

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OKLAHOMA CITY - A new measure is being put forth to place another list of ten guidelines on the grounds of the State Capitol. But this time, lawmakers are hoping there will be much less outrage.

“It's common ground for all Americans. And it's the basis of our constitution and our constitutional rights,” Sen. Patrick Anderson (R-Enid) said at a small press conference Tuesday afternoon.

Tuesday marked the annual celebration of Bill of Rights Day. If approved, Oklahoma would join Alabama as a possible future site. The Texas capitol is also a potential site, according to the Associated Press.

Arizona has the nation's only active monument which was opened in 2012. It displays each of the amendments on jagged-looking stone tablets in a 60 foot arc along the Capitol grounds.

The plan is being driven by MyBillofRights.org; a group that wants to put the amendments at every state capitol in the country. The monument would cost roughly \$500,000 and would be funded through private donors, according to the group's executive director Chris Bliss.

“We're looking to create a real space for contemplation and to attract visitors and be an attraction that will add to all the other attraction at the Capitol,” Bliss said.

Bliss added it can serve as an educational tool for students and visitors on what he called the principles that make the U.S. exceptional.

But still, it's hard not to draw parallels between the amendments and the controversial Ten Commandments monument that was removed just months ago from Capitol grounds. The irony is not lost on the new monument's bi-partisan backers either.

"This particular project, which is completely unrelated to the Ten Commandments monument, is something that we can all unite around," Anderson said.

The proposal is being co-authored by Sen. John Sparks (D-Norman). He said the monument should serve as a reminder of the democratic foundations of the U.S., not just for visitors, but for those who write laws and would apply to members of the legislature that like to "pick and choose" their version of the constitution.

"When you have something like the Bill of Rights that's established like the monuments, I think it underscores that all of the words in the Bill of Rights are equally important," he said.

There is no official site for the monument yet. Bliss said that would come with what's allowed on Capitol grounds. However, it may be sometime before the proposal is approved.

The Capitol Preservation Commission issued a moratorium on all monuments after the Ten Commandments controversy that it has not lifted as of Tuesday.