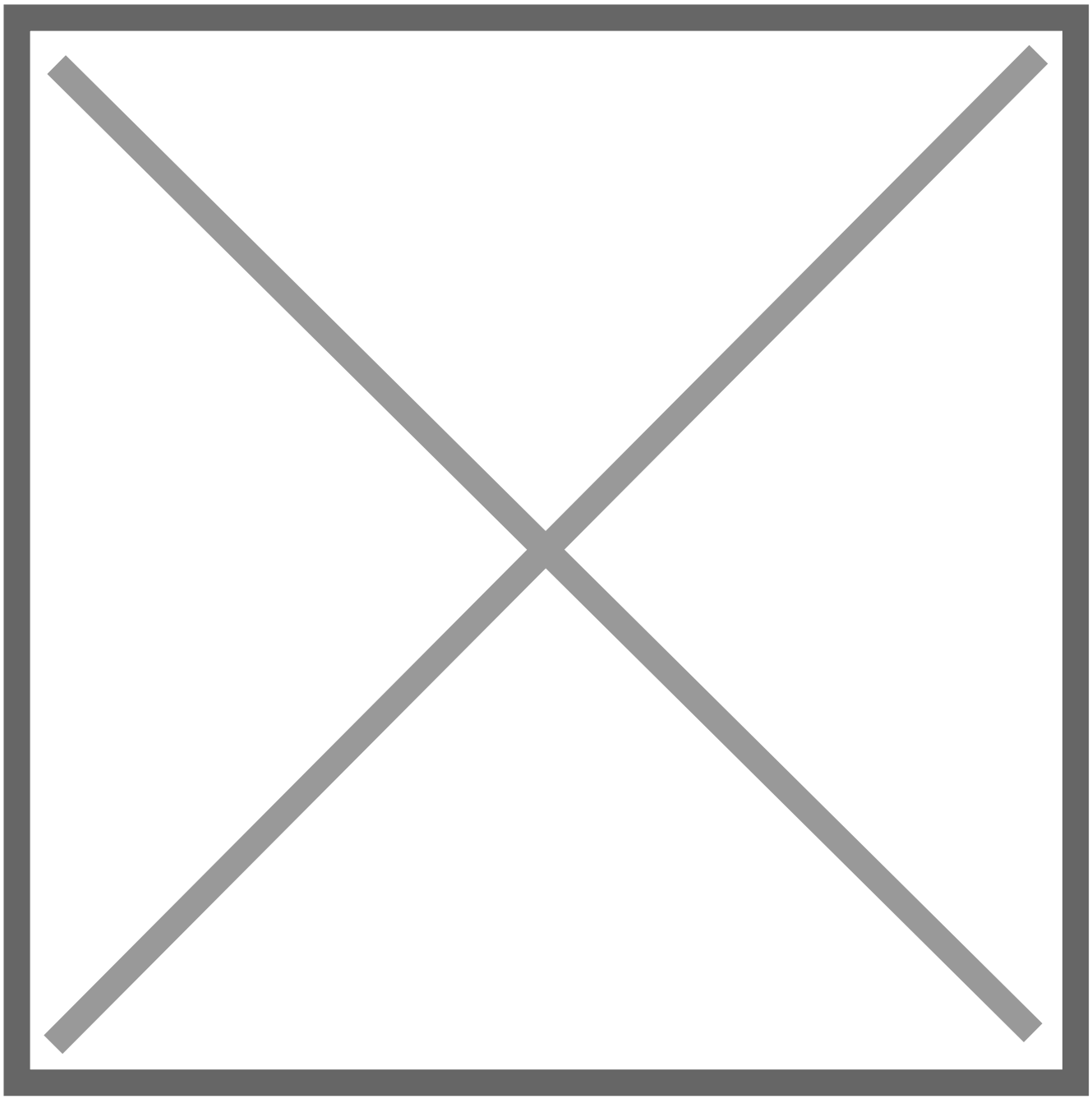
News



Stone tablets depicting the Ten Commandments are shown in a file photo outside the Supreme Court in Washington. The state of Louisiana has asked the full 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to protect its ability to display the Ten Commandments in its public school classrooms. (OSV News/Reuters/Jason Reed)

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A federal appeals court will hear arguments in January about state laws in Texas and Louisiana requiring the Ten Commandments to be displayed in public school classrooms.

The full panel of judges on the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals will hear both appeals after federal judges struck the laws down.

A federal judge struck down the Louisiana law in 2024 as unconstitutional. In August, a similar law in Texas was partially blocked from enforcement, with a federal judge finding the law requiring school classrooms to display the Ten Commandments violated the First Amendment.

Supporters of such laws often argue that the Ten Commandments have historical and cultural significance, while opponents argue they are an unconstitutional display of faith in a public setting, with some noting even different Christian groups use different groupings of them.

Catholics and Lutherans follow a numbering of the Ten Commandments established by St. Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430), one of the most important fathers of the Latin Church, while the Orthodox and most Protestant denominations follow a numbering of the commandments set out by the early Christian scholar Origen of Alexandria (A.D. 185-254).

Joseph Davis, senior counsel at Becket, a religious liberty law firm representing Louisiana in the case, said, "The ACLU seems to think that any trace of religion in public life should trigger a code red-level alarm."

"To our Founders, that idea would have been laughable," Davis said. "America has a longstanding tradition of recognizing faith in the public square, and the court should allow Louisiana to maintain it by displaying the Ten Commandments in its public schools."

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In the Texas case, a group of plaintiffs, comprised of both religious and nonreligious families, represented by organizations including the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State, had sued over the law, arguing it violated the First Amendment.

In a July statement issued through the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, plaintiff in the Texas case, Pastor Griff Martin, said, "Posting the Ten Commandments in public schools is un-American and un-Baptist."

"S.B. 10 undermines the separation of church and state as a bedrock principle of my family's Baptist heritage," he said, using the state law's title. "Baptists have long held that the government has no role in religion -- so that our faith may remain free and authentic. My children's faith should be shaped by family and our religious community, not by a Christian nationalist movement that confuses God with power."

In his statement, Davis added, "Symbols with religious meaning have been a welcome fixture of American life since before the Founding."

"But to hear the ACLU tell it, every trace of faith in the public view should trigger a constitutional crisis," he said. "That's flat-out wrong — and we're asking the court to make it clear in this case."

Legal scholars previously told OSV News the saga is likely to eventually reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

Arguments are scheduled for Jan. 20, 2026.