



CONGRESSIONAL PRAYER CAUCUS FOUNDATION

July 10, 2019

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Congressman Chris Smith
Congressman Glenn Thompson
Congressman Tim Walberg
Congressman Joe Wilson
Congressman Robert Wittman

Superintendent David Brand
New Philadelphia City Schools
248 Front Ave SW
New Philadelphia, OH 44663

Re: Ten Commandments

Dear Superintendent Brand:

I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation. The Foundation serves nearly 100 members of Congress who are part of the Congressional Prayer Caucus (the names of those members of Congress who serve on the Congressional Advisory Team are listed on the left).

In addition, the Foundation serves Legislative Prayer Caucuses in over 32 states, which have over 1,000 state senators and state representatives as members. These leaders are working together to preserve the integrity of our founding principles and to protect First Amendment rights for all.

We learned that the Freedom From Religious Foundation (“FFRF”) recently sent you a letter demanding that you remove the Ten Commandments plaque from Welty Middle School. The reason for our correspondence today is to encourage you to restore the Decalogue plaque.

A recent decision by the Supreme Court of the United States, *American Legion v. American Humanist Association*, affirmed that forced removal of religious symbols shows hostility toward religion that the U.S. Constitution forbids.

Justice Samuel Alito, who wrote the court’s opinion on behalf of the majority, pointed to the ruling of *Van Orden v. Perry*, in which a Ten Commandments monument in Texas was upheld because it was both

religious and historical. “For believing Jews and Christians, the Ten Commandments are the word of God handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, but the image of the Ten Commandments has also been used to convey other meanings,” Alito wrote. “They have historical significance as one of the foundations of our legal system, and for largely that reason, they are depicted in the marble frieze in our courtroom and in other prominent public buildings in our nation’s capital.”

We agree with the analysis provided in the letter written by First Liberty Institute, “The historical significance of the Ten Commandments, with its role in shaping civic morality and as a foundation of our legal system, ought to be welcomed in public. Its removal is not neutral and may be rightly interpreted by many as hostile toward religion. That is forbidden by the U.S. Constitution.”

We understand the pressures you face, and simply want you to know that there are greater consequences for caving to the threats of anti-faith groups. America has a rich religious heritage that should be respected and promoted in order for our Constitutional Republic to endure.

Thank you for all you do for your district’s children.

For Faith and Freedom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lea Carawan".

Lea Carawan
Executive Director
Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation