

Remarks of Rabbi Jack Moline, President, Interfaith Alliance  
#HonorThemAll Rally February 27, 2019

Good morning, my friends. I am so pleased to be standing among this amazing coalition of people whose perspectives run the gamut of faiths and philosophies protected by the First Amendment. I congratulate the American Humanist Association for gathering us and recognizing, as we do at Interfaith Alliance, that freedom of conscience in this country is absolute, and that government has no role to play in establishing a preference for any religion or for no religion. That's not just a good idea, it's the law.

We at Interfaith Alliance are proud to stand with any individual or group of individuals whose faith commitments have been abused or arrogated by the government. That's why I am here today to speak in support of my Christian brothers and sisters who find such deep religious meaning in the Latin cross. It is for them the pre-eminent symbol of the defining religious principle in their lives. No doubt, when the originators of the Bladensburg Cross chose that symbol to honor the young men who paid the ultimate price for the defense of freedom, they had in mind power of their own faith to heal the broken-hearted and to give meaning to the sacrifice.

But now this privately-funded, privately-erected profound religious symbol rests on public land and is maintained by public funds. And the only way that is possible is for the courts – THIS court – to declare that because of its long-standing presence it may be considered less than a marker of Christian faith. This court, dedicated to applying the Constitution fairly and with integrity, would have to strip the cross of its salvific power to devoted Christians in order to make it eligible to rest on public land and be maintained by public funds.

Nothing would dishonor the original fallen veterans more than to deny the intentions of their families and neighbors. Nothing would dishonor the subsequent heroes more than to suggest that the symbols of their own personal faith, philosophy or conscience were considered inadequate to acknowledge their sacrifice. Nothing would dishonor the diverse population of modern-day Bladensburg more than to deliver the message that their own sacred symbols might some day be appropriated without their consent.

I have long stood with my Christian brothers and sisters who insisted on keeping the Christ in Christmas and in making the imminent holy time of Lent and Easter, when Christians reflect on the meaning of this symbol, about more than bunnies and chocolate eggs. I stand with them now in urging the Justices of the Supreme Court to respect the particular meaning of the cross.

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