

**Contacts:**

Jennifer Grisham 202.297.1290  
media@libertylegal.org 972.423.3131, x102  
Roe Ann Estevez 972.423.3131, x115  
raestevez@libertylegal.org Cell: 214.235.6713

For Immediate Release:

**June 8, 2009****Veterans File Brief Urging Supreme Court to Save Memorial:  
Case Could Decide the Fate of Veterans' Memorials Nationwide**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Today, on behalf of more than four million veterans and the memorial's caretakers, Liberty Legal Institute and former Texas Solicitor General Ted Cruz filed an amicus brief in the U.S. Supreme Court asking the High Court to save the now-forbidden Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial. Members of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, The American Legion, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Veterans of Foreign Wars of California, and the American Ex-Prisoners of War, joined together in the brief to stand for the seven-foot-tall cross which is at stake in *Salazar, et al. v. Buono*.

"This case impacts not just one veterans' memorial in the desert, but thousands across the country. Tearing down the Mojave Desert Veterans' Memorial, which has been there since 1934, would be unconscionable and it would also impact thousands of other memorials nationwide," said Kelly Shackelford, chief counsel of Liberty Legal Institute, which represents the memorial caretakers and the veterans in the case.

The case *Salazar v. Buono* arose when a former National Park Service (NPS) employee sued for the removal of a seven-foot-tall cross erected in the Mojave Desert in 1934 as a war memorial to honor all fallen soldiers. Following attempts by Congress to designate the cross as a national memorial and to transfer the land to the VFW, the District Court and Ninth Circuit Court both ruled that the cross is unconstitutional and must be removed. The memorial is currently covered with a plywood box awaiting a U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

This case is part of a larger trend of lawsuits on war memorials with religious imagery and all displays with religious symbolism on public property. In addition to the lawsuit against the Mojave Desert War Memorial, the ACLU is suing for the removal of the Mount Soledad Memorial (*Paulson v. Abdelnour, et al.*). A related case in which the veterans filed an amicus brief, *Pleasant Grove City v. Summum*, which dealt with donated monuments on public property, was resolved in the Supreme Court earlier this year in a decision where the Court referenced the veterans' brief.

Liberty Legal Institute is a legal organization committed to the defense of religious freedoms and First Amendment rights and is often before the U.S. Supreme Court. View detailed timelines of these cases at [www.DontTearMeDown.com](http://www.DontTearMeDown.com).

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Please contact Jennifer Grisham at (972) 423-3131 extension 102 or [jgrisham@libertylegal.org](mailto:jgrisham@libertylegal.org) for interviews or a copy of the brief.

Interviews and B-roll of memorial are available.