

Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, left, walks through a crowd of supporters in front of the State Judicial Building in Montgomery, Ala., on Monday. Moore is under suspension for failing to follow a federal court order to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the building.

DAVE MARTIN / Associated Press



Monument lawsuit filed

▶ The suit claims a threat to the guarantee of freedom of religion.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Supporters asked a federal court Monday to block the removal of a Ten Commandments monument from the Alabama Judicial Building while the judge who put the marker there said he's up against those who "are offended at looking at God's words."

The lawsuit to block the monument's removal was filed in federal court in Mobile on behalf of a Christian radio talk show host and a pastor. It says a forced removal would violate the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion.

U.S. District Judge William Steele set a hearing for Wednesday.

Chief Justice Roy Moore installed the monument in the

building's rotunda two years ago, and was suspended by a state judicial ethics panel last week for disobeying a federal court order to remove the 5,300-pound granite marker.

In a brief speech Monday, Moore told a cheering crowd he would fight to return to his elected position and said the case against him is based not on something he did wrong but because "I've kept my oath."

The federal courts have held that the monument violates the Constitution's ban on government promotion of a religious doctrine.

Patrick Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition, disputed that.

"We see the First Amendment to protect religious liberty, not crush religious liberty," he told a crowd of more than 100 protesters.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the lawsuit filed in Mobile is without merit.

"Over and over again Moore's supporters have offered up outlandish legal arguments to defend the justice's blatant promotion of religion in the state's judicial building," said Lynn, whose group has sought to remove the monument.

Minutes after the lawsuit was announced, police blocked off the front of the building with metal barricades. Building superintendent Graham George said they were erected to prevent protesters from leaning dangerously against the large windows and glass doors, where they have gathered for the last week.

The monument is expected to be removed this week, though at least one company refused the job. Clark Memorial, a Birmingham company that built and moved the monument into the building, declined for business and personal reasons, vice president Charles Tourney said.



JAMES GIBBARD / Tulsa World

Various citizens, including County Commissioner Wilbert Collins (third from left) and Mayor Bill LaFortune (middle) pose for a photo during a Vision 2025 rally in north Tulsa on Monday.

Arts groups back Vision

▶ Mayor LaFortune says the package will benefit Tulsa arts in the long run.

By CURTIS KILLMAN

World Staff Writer

The Vision 2025 initiative has received the backing of several groups from the local arts community, although some expressed regrets about a lack of direct support from the package.

The stands were announced following a forum Monday that featured Mayor Bill LaFortune and others urging support for the Sept. 9 Vision 2025 vote.

Tulsa Opera General Director Carol I. Crawford issued a statement that backs the Vision 2025 package despite expressing her regret that more support for the opera is not in the \$885 million initiative.

"Sept. 9 cannot be a dress rehearsal. It's time to perform," Crawford said.

Statements supporting the measure were also read from Tulsa Ballet, Philbrook Museum Executive Director Brian Ferriso, Light Opera Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame and the Arts and Humanities Council.

LaFortune defended the Vision 2025 package, noting that the list of projects that will benefit the arts community includes \$4 million for the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, \$2 million for the American Indian Cultural Center, \$15 million for renovation of historic Route 66 and \$125 million for an 18,000-seat arena.

When assembling the Vision



package, the decision was made to focus on "bricks and mortar" projects rather than measures that fund operations, he said.

Most of the funding requests from the arts community were to fund operations, LaFortune said.

The mayor also said he would not rule out an increase in the hotel-motel tax to benefit the arts community. A study has indicated, though, that the existing hotel-motel tax rate is high, LaFortune said.

He said the Vision 2025 focus on job creation will benefit the arts in the long run.

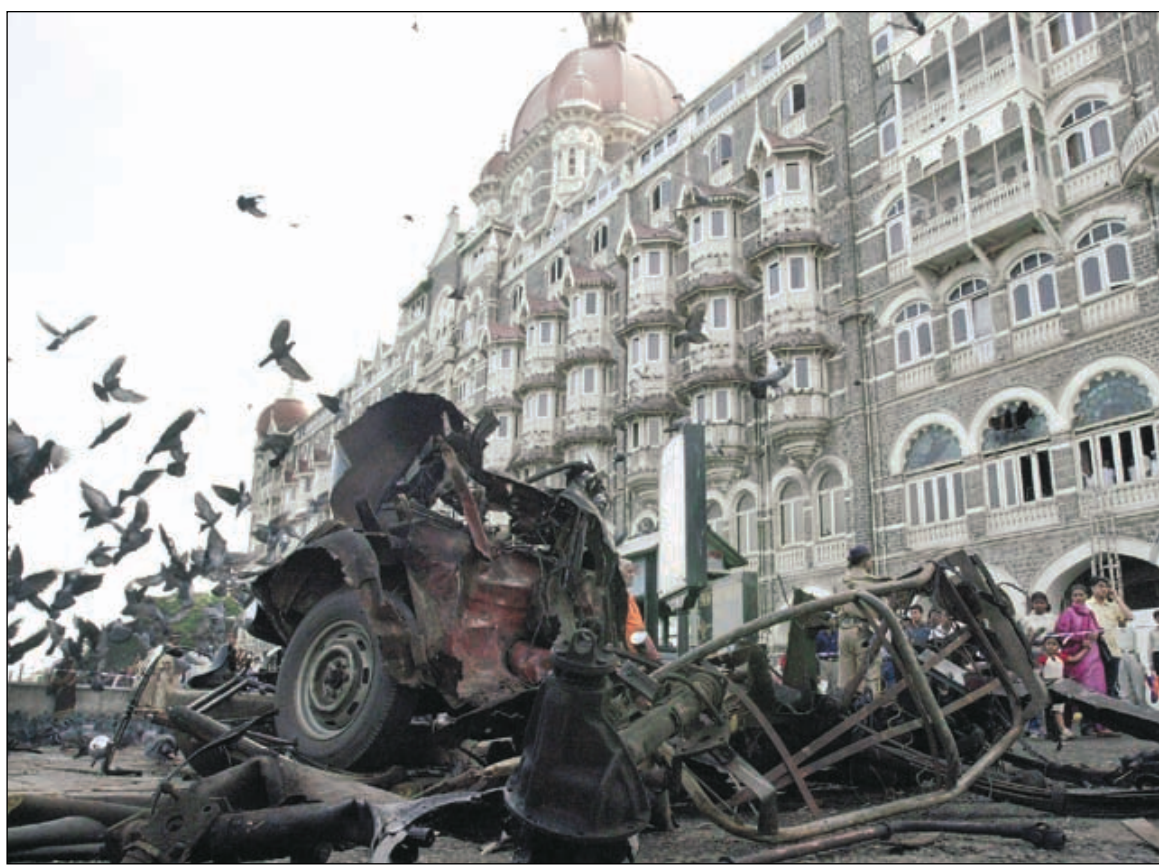
"We've got to have jobs to have a strong arts community," LaFortune said. "Sept. 9 is a pivotal day."

Meanwhile, several north Tulsa leaders gathered Monday to show support for Vision 2025.

County Commission Chairman Wilbert Collins, whose district includes north Tulsa County, said passage of the Vision 2025 package will mean millions of dollars in investments in north Tulsa.

"There are those that say, 'Do not increase the taxes,'" Collins said.

"Well, I'm against taxes that increase the government," Collins said. "But this does not increase the government. It all benefits the community, it's economic development and jobs. It's a temporary tax."



AJAZ RAHI / Associated Press

The wreckage of a taxi that contained a bomb lies Monday in front of the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, India.

BOMBAY:

A sectarian dispute over a possible ancient religious site may have led to the attack.

FROM A-1

"an act of terrorism."

"We deplore these attacks and we sympathize with the victims and their families," Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman Masood Khan said. "I think that such wanton targeting of civilians should be condemned in the strongest possible terms."

New Delhi accuses Pakistan of supporting militants, which Islamabad denies. Indian police said they had no direct evidence linking those groups, or Pakistan, to Monday's bombings.

The attacks appeared aimed more at the city itself than at members of a particular religion.

One of the bombs exploded at the Gateway of India, a landmark and tourist attraction built by India's former British coloniz-

ers to commemorate the 1911 visit of King George V. The massive arch is often host to outdoor concerts and is a popular lunchtime spot for both Hindus and Muslims. The other blast was at the crowded neighborhood of jewelry stores, where many shops are owned by Hindus but where many of the artisans are Muslims.

"All kinds of people work here — Hindus, Muslims and Christians," said Ali Asghar, 24, a student whose father works in a bank near the jewelry market. "This is not about religion."

But his father, Mohammed Asghar, feared that Muslims would be blamed — and that anti-Muslim riots could follow.

"I don't want to leave Bombay. Where would we go? We feel safe here," he said.

Sushil Kumar Shinde, the chief minister of Maharashtra state, which includes Bombay, said the explosions had targeted the city's economy. "The blasts have thrown up a challenge to the resilience of this city," he told a news conference.

Sharma said the death toll totaled 44 by early evening. Javed Ahmed, a police commissioner

for Bombay, said at least 150 people were injured.

The blasts came just hours after the release of the archaeological report on the religious site in Ayodhya, where in 1992 Hindu mobs tore down the 16th-century Babri mosque, which they say was built on a temple marking the birthplace of their supreme god, Rama. More than 2,000 died in the nationwide violence that followed.

In March, a bomb attack on a Bombay train, for which police blamed Islamic militants, killed 11 people and wounded 64 others.

That explosion came a day after the 10th anniversary of a series of bombings in Bombay that killed more than 250 people and were considered the work of Islamic militants seeking to avenge Muslim deaths in the riots that followed the mosque's razing.

The report issued Monday by government archaeologists indicated there had been an ancient structure at the site, lawyers for both sides said, but they disagreed on whether it said there had actually been a temple.

LAWSUIT:

Bob Dick said, "I'm sorry this has taken a turn like this at the 11th hour, but desperate people take desperate measures."

FROM A-1

ma Aquarium in Jenks, the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame and the Air and Space Museum, enhancements to Route 66, flood protection projects, street projects, downtown neighborhood improvements and trail projects

The other two propositions include \$350 million to lure the Boeing Co., to build an assembly plant for its new passenger jets in Tulsa and \$22.3 million in capital improvements for American Airlines' maintenance facility here.

The lawsuit states that Propositions 3 and 4 represent multiple projects.

"The intent is clear and obvious: throw enough money at each of the voting blocks to ensure passage of a group of unrelated projects that may not pass if each individual project were considered separately," the suit states.

"The lack of a common, closely akin theme or purpose is clear when you compare a new convention center to school books or a new public health center to Expo Square. ... Similarly, Route 66 improvements are not germane to a water line in Owasso. The Jazz Hall of Fame has nothing to do with the Zink Lake shore beautification," the lawsuit states.

Dick said county officials knew that the ballot would have to withstand the scrutiny of the court and are confident that it will.

The lead attorney on drafting the ballot for the county, Tom Hilborne, said all the attorneys

involved "are very comfortable that the ballot as drafted and approved" complies with the state Constitution and statutes.

Hilborne refused to comment further, stating that he has not reviewed the lawsuit.

Dick said, "I'm sorry this has taken a turn like this at the 11th hour, but desperate people take desperate measures."

In court documents, Huston claims that he has made contact with "one or more" of the commissioners and that the contact "has been without remedy or any reason to believe remedy would occur" without a temporary injunction.

But Dick said he and Commissioner Willbert Collins have not been contacted by Huston. Commissioner Randi Miller, who spoke out against the package before voting in favor of sending it to the voters, could not be reached.

Huston's attorney, Gary Richardson, said his client's lawsuit is not in opposition to the measures but is about the way they are packaged. "We just want the people to know what they are voting on and do so without packaging things together."

The lawsuit states that the "Single Subject Rule has two purposes, the first (of which) is to prevent imposition upon or deceit of the public by the presentation of a proposal which is misleading or the effect of which is concealed or not readily understandable. The second is to afford the voters freedom of choice and prevent logrolling."

The lawsuit cites an unrelated 1993 lawsuit in which the Oklahoma Supreme Court affirmed the "germaneness test," which is met if the various provisions are related to a common theme or purpose.

A status conference on the case is set for 11:15 a.m. Sept. 2 in Tulsa County District Judge Jane Wiseman's courtroom.

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