



*(Coach Kennedy kneeling at the fifty-yard line on the Bremerton High School football field.
Photo credit: First Liberty Institute. May be republished.
Access full resolution photos at CoachKennedyFacts.com under "Photos and Videos")*

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT FIRED HIM FOR PRAYING

Coach Joe Kennedy, suspended by Bremerton School District (BSD) for silently praying after football games, files a lawsuit against the school district, alleging religious discrimination

Bremerton, Wash. – Today, former high school football coach Joe Kennedy filed a lawsuit against Bremerton School District (BSD) after the school district terminated him for offering a brief, quiet prayer at the fifty-yard line after high school football games.

Read the lawsuit at CoachKennedyFacts.com.

In the lawsuit, Coach Kennedy's attorneys said, "Bremerton School District's actions violate Coach Kennedy's First Amendment rights to free speech and free exercise, as well as his rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion." In the complaint, Coach Kennedy declined to seek monetary damages and instead simply requested that the school reinstate him so he can continue coaching the kids.

"When the school district fired me, I was devastated," Coach Kennedy says. "I really hope that the school district will give me my job back so I can get back to doing what I love most: coaching my players."

Coach Kennedy is represented by the national non-profit law firm First Liberty Institute, as well as Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, Oldfield & Helsdon, PLLC, and attorney Anthony J. Ferate.

“Citizens who work for government are not banned from praying. That’s not the law. That’s religious hostility and discrimination,” Mike Berry, Senior Counsel at First Liberty Institute, says. “All we are asking is for Coach Kennedy to be reinstated and for the school to allow him to continue to pray alone at the fifty-yard line after the game.”

“The First Amendment guarantees Coach Kennedy’s rights to free speech and free exercise of his religion,” Rebekah Ricketts, attorney at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, says. “We fully expect those constitutional rights to be vindicated when Coach Kennedy gets his day in court.”

“As a student at Bremerton High School, I was taught the importance of Constitutional Rights; the school district, by act, has specifically devalued Coach Kennedy’s,” attorney and Bremerton High School alumni Anthony J. Ferate added. “It’s time for Coach to be allowed to get back to serving as a positive role model to students in Bremerton.”

Coach Kennedy filed a charge of religious discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against Bremerton School District in December. On June 27, the U.S. Department of Justice issued a right-to-sue letter to Coach Kennedy.

Read more and view legal documents at CoachKennedyFacts.com

About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](http://FirstLibertyInstitute.org) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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