



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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**SCHOOL DISTRICT DENIES COACH'S REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS
ACCOMMODATION; COACH'S ATTORNEYS RESPOND**

Bremerton School District says Coach Joe Kennedy can't pray alone, silently, at the fifty-yard line after football games; his attorneys announce that they will initiate legal proceedings

BREMERTON, WA, October 26, 2015 — On Friday, October 23, Bremerton School District sent a letter to Coach Kennedy denying his request for religious accommodation. The school district said if Coach Kennedy prays after football games, even silently and alone, he could be disciplined, up to and including being terminated from his job. *(Read the school district's letter: <https://www.libertyinstitute.org/coachkennedy>)*

The school district's letter came one week after Coach Kennedy requested a religious accommodation to allow him to continue to pray after football games, as he has done for seven years without complaint. *(Read the coach's request: <https://www.libertyinstitute.org/coachkennedy>)*

Today, Coach Joe Kennedy and his attorneys at Liberty Institute announce that they are initiating legal proceedings against the school for violating Coach Kennedy's rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act by refusing to honor his reasonable request for religious accommodation.

Coach Joe Kennedy says, "I am devastated that the school district is denying me an opportunity to privately and silently pray for my players at the fifty. I love my players and I hope I can continue coaching them and being a part of their lives."

Mike Berry, Senior Counsel at Liberty Institute says, “The school district violated federal law by denying Coach Kennedy’s request for religious accommodation. Their violation of the law cannot go unanswered. We are committed to protecting Coach Kennedy’s right to religious freedom.”

Volunteer Counsel Anthony J. Ferate noted, “I received a great education during my time as a Bremerton School District student, but today, the school district needs to learn a lesson – follow the law, respect the coach’s rights, and let him pray.”

Read more about the case at <https://www.libertyinstitute.org/coachkennedy>

Case Background

Coach Joe Kennedy is head coach for the Bremerton High School junior varsity football team and an assistant coach for the varsity team. After his first football game in 2008, Coach Kennedy waited until the game had ended and the players had cleared the field, then he walked to the fifty-yard line, took a knee, and thanked God for his players. He continued this practice for subsequent games.

He has done this for seven years and no students, coaches, or parents have ever complained about it. Nevertheless, following his request for a religious accommodation, the Bremerton School District sent Coach Kennedy a letter, ordering him to stop praying after the game, or even bowing his head or being physically present where students may be praying. After the school district threatened to terminate the coach over his prayer, Liberty Institute attorneys announced they will initiate legal proceedings against the school.

Read more about the case at <https://www.libertyinstitute.org/coachkennedy>

About Liberty Institute

[Liberty Institute](https://www.libertyinstitute.org) is the largest nonprofit legal organization in the nation dedicated solely to defending religious liberty in America. Liberty Institute defends religious freedom for all.

To arrange an interview on this case, contact Kassie Dulin, Director of Legal Communications for Liberty Institute. Email: kdulin@libertyinstitute.org, Direct: 972-941-9575, Cell: 214-542-4334.

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