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PRESS RELEASE

Contacts: Gregg Wooding, Cell: 214.558.9455, Office: 972.941.4444, gwooding@libertyinstitute.org

FEDERAL COURT GRANTS PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION IN CHALLENGE TO LAW BANNING CHURCHES

Liberty Institute Applauds Federal Court's Ruling Protecting the Rights of Religious Ministries

BROWNSVILLE, TX, Nov. 25, 2014— Today, United States District Court Judge Andrew Hanen issued a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit brought by Cornerstone Church by the Bay, its Pastor Hamilton Musser, and Laguna Madre Christian Academy against the Town of Bayview, TX concerning the Town's zoning ordinance, which banned the church and religious school from operating on their own property. The favorable ruling prohibits enforcement of the unlawful ordinance against the church, and allows the church and its affiliated school to begin the permitting process to use the property in their ministries. To view the court's ruling online, follow this link: <https://libertyinstitute.org/cornerstone?>

"We are very encouraged by today's ruling," said Jeff Mateer, Liberty Institute General Counsel. "It is a victory for our clients and for the religious freedom of all Texans. We are thankful that the court recognized that it is unlawful for the Town to interfere with the church's use of its own property."

For years, Cornerstone Church by the Bay had to rent space to hold services. Recently, however, it was gifted property in Bayview and requested permission from the town to use the property as a church and school. But in June 2014, after denying Cornerstone's request, the Bayview Board of Aldermen unanimously voted to ban churches and schools from the area where Cornerstone's property sits—despite allowing nonreligious institutions in that exact same area.

"We are thrilled that the court upheld our right to use our building as a church," said Pastor Hamilton Musser. "We look forward to working with the Town and are confident that the Town will approve the plans of our church school, so that we can continue to minister to the surrounding community and the children and families of Laguna Madre Christian Academy."

"We are encouraged that our clients received justice today," said Prerak Shah, an attorney at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP. "This type of blatant discrimination against Cornerstone Church and other religious ministries by heavy-handed government is what led our Founders to enact the First Amendment in the first place."

Liberty Institute is a nonprofit legal group dedicated to defending and restoring religious liberty across America — in our schools, for our churches, in the military and throughout the public arena. Liberty's vision is to reestablish religious liberty in accordance with the principles of our nation's Founders. For information, visit www.LibertyInstitute.org.

