



Press Release

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Contact: Lacey McNiel, lmcniel@firstliberty.org

Direct: 972-941-4453

Ninth Circuit Issues Decision Allowing School to Fire a Football Coach for Praying Silently for 15 Seconds After a Game

SEATTLE, Wash.— Today, the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held that a school may ban Coach Kennedy from praying silently for 15 seconds following a football game. Coach Kennedy is represented by First Liberty Institute.

“Banning all coaches from praying individually in public just because they can be seen is wrong,” First Liberty President and CEO Kelly Shackelford said. “This is not the America contemplated by our Constitution.”

Coach Kennedy’s case has received attention from prominent national leaders, including President Trump who [voiced support](#) for Coach Kennedy on social media. Additionally, NFL players Steve Largent, a retired member of the Seattle Seahawks and member of the NFL Hall of Fame, as well as Chad Hennings, a retired Dallas Cowboy and three-time Super Bowl Champion, filed an [amicus brief](#) with the Ninth Circuit in support of Coach Kennedy.

“According to the Ninth Circuit, it is unconstitutional for a coach to make a sign of the cross or bow his head in prayer when a player gets hurt,” said Mike Berry, Deputy General Counsel to First Liberty. “We are deeply disappointed by the decision and will consider all options available to Coach Kennedy as we continue to review the opinion.”

To read the Ninth Circuit’s opinion, click [here](#).

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel, lmcniel@firstliberty.org, Direct: 972-941-4453.