

FIRST  LIBERTY

UNDENIABLE



The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

Kelly Shackelford

Executive Editor

2017 PUBLIC ARENA EDITION

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to Religion in America

2017 Public Arena Edition

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WHAT IS FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE?

First Liberty Institute is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious liberty for all Americans.

A non-profit law firm, First Liberty handles hundreds of legal matters each year at no cost to its clients and educates Americans regarding the first liberty in the Bill of Rights: religious liberty.

PRAISE FOR FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE

“When it comes to winning big cases for the religious liberty of Americans, First Liberty Institute shines. I have had the privilege of working as part of their team on just such cases. First Liberty Institute’s intelligence, quality, and strategy give people of faith the best representation. They care about results, not taking credit, and the result is victories.”

Paul Clement, former Solicitor General of the United States,
attorney with over 85 U.S. Supreme Court appearances

“[First Liberty] has litigated all across the country defending religious liberty. . . . In every one of those fights, my friend Kelly Shackelford has been front and center.”

Ted Cruz, U.S. Senator

“[First Liberty is] the best. Students, churches, and people of faith depend on them to stop those who would silence faith.”

Rick Perry, U.S. Secretary of Energy, former Governor of Texas

“I have enormous respect for the quality of First Liberty’s critical work and the results they’ve achieved.”

Allyson Ho, former White House Special Assistant and
U.S. Supreme Court clerk, appellate attorney with multiple
Supreme Court appearances

Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

“First Liberty Institute and Kelly Shackelford are at the forefront of the intensifying battle to preserve our religious freedom. I’ve known of their work for years, and today it’s more important than ever.”

Mike Huckabee, former Governor of Arkansas

“First Liberty Institute’s one-of-a-kind legal strategy is indispensable to the survival of religious freedom in America.”

Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council

“When it comes to defending religious liberty in America, especially for our military and veterans, First Liberty Institute is the tip of the spear. I know of no organization I’d rather have by my side. They are the best.”

Lt. Gen. (Retired) William G. “Jerry” Boykin, Executive Vice President, Family Research Council

“Because First Liberty does what it does, ministers like me can do what we do.”

Dr. Charles Stanley, In Touch Ministries

“First Liberty Institute is strategic. Their work liberates people of faith.”

Lt. Gen. (Retired) Mike Gould, USAF

“First Liberty is the critical place to invest in the future of religious freedom.”

Norm Miller, Chairman, Interstate Batteries

“The American Legion and First Liberty Institute both unapologetically stand ‘for God and Country,’ a stance that will never waver. We appreciate the outstanding work First Liberty Institute has done in protecting our nation’s veterans memorials.”

Michael D. Helm, National Commander, The American Legion

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Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

THE TIME FOR DENIAL IS PAST

To deny that religious freedom is in crisis in America is to deny the obvious. And yet there are deniers. Ironically, they include those who launch the very attacks that have caused the crisis itself. The American people, however, deserve the truth.

For that reason, every year a team of legal researchers at First Liberty Institute—led by a Harvard-trained constitutional attorney—investigates and documents the rise in the number and severity of domestic attacks on religion. The findings are published in book form in *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America*. In the latest full edition, the total number of documented incidents in this report increased by over 15 percent over the past year and now includes more than 1,400 religious liberty incidents.

Attacks on Religious Liberty



133% increase in 5 years

These figures include an increase in attacks in a key subsector of American life: The public arena, including the workplace, government, and other public areas of our society. This “Public Arena Edition” constitutes that subsection of the larger version of *Undeniable* (the full edition of *Undeniable* also includes findings from other sectors of American society).

After years of providing this research—widely cited in the media—we are now seeing confirmation from a growing number of sources and directions.

International Christian Concern (ICC), a respected global watchdog that monitors persecution, listed the United States for the first time in its annual “Hall of Shame” report in January 2017, noting America’s alarming rise in hostility toward Christians. Their report stated, “While there is no comparison between the life of a Christian in the U.S. with persecuted believers overseas, ICC sees these worrying trends as an alarming indication of a decline in religious liberty in the United States.”¹

¹ International Christian Concern, “2016 Hall of Shame Report” (Jan. 2017).

Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

The ICC report dovetails with findings published by noted sociologist Dr. George Yancey. He and his team did extensive and careful research into the roots of American hostility to religion. He found what he called widespread “irrational” animus toward traditional Christian beliefs among those with higher educational degrees and privileged positions in society.

In fact, Dr. Yancey found that those with the highest degree of animosity toward traditional religion were those with the most money, education, and power to turn that irrational animus into action in the legal arena.¹

The significance of Dr. Yancey’s findings go beyond their implications for any one religion. They speak to the threat to religious liberty for all religions. Hostility that threatens to become unlawful suppression of any religion is a threat to all religions and our American ideal of a free marketplace of various faiths and ideologies.

Other confirmation comes directly from those promoting a negative view of religious activity and announcing their desire to suppress it.

In September 2016, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights sent a report entitled *Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties* to President Obama and Congress declaring that “the phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’” are nothing but “code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy, or any form of intolerance.” The report also denounced routine religious exemptions as infringing upon civil rights. In other words, people of faith should be forced to do what their faith says they cannot.²

Also in 2016, a noted Harvard law professor wrote that the “culture wars” were over, that people with certain religious beliefs had lost, and that they should be treated with no leniency, noting that “taking a hard line seemed to work reasonably well in Germany and Japan after 1945.”³

But the rise in hostility comes as no surprise to attorneys who specialize in this field, such as the legal team at First Liberty Institute (the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans). Each year we see hundreds of cases.

1 George Yancey & David A Williamson, *So Many Christians, So Few Lions* (2015).

2 U.S. Comm’n on Civil Rights, *Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties*, available at <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/Peaceful-Coexistence-09-07-16.PDF> (Sept. 7, 2016).

3 Mark Tushnet, “Abandoning Defensive Crouch Liberal Constitutionalism,” *Balkinization*, <https://balkin.blogspot.com/2016/05/abandoning-defensive-crouch-liberal.html> (May 6, 2016).



The Time for Denial is Past

You can read about the cases pertaining to government, the workplace, and other areas of public life in the pages of *Undeniable: 2017 Public Arena Edition*. And you can take heart that the vast majority of the hostility to religion you will read about is unlawful. It succeeds only because of its own bluff and the passivity of its victims. Hostility to religion can be defeated in the culture and the legal system—but only if challenged by Americans like you. The time for denying the crisis, however, is long past.

Kelly Shackelford
President, CEO, and Chief Counsel
First Liberty Institute



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An age is called Dark not because the light fails to shine, but because people refuse to see it.

James A. Michener, Space

Abstract

Hostility to religion in America continues to grow at an alarming rate.

- In the **Public Arena** of public places, the government, and the workplace, religious individuals and groups are facing increasing demands to hide their faith or to sacrifice their beliefs in order to keep their jobs and their livelihoods.
- In the **Schoolhouse**, from kindergarten through graduate school, students and teachers face professional, personal, and academic threats for living out their faith and refusing to compromise their beliefs.
- In **Churches and Ministries**—an area in which one might expect hostility to be the least—religious leaders are censored, houses of worship are shuttered, and ministries have been told they must violate their religious beliefs or face crippling fines.
- In the **Military**, chaplains face courts-martial for providing religious counseling according to their religious beliefs, service members are told that they cannot express their faith, and veterans endure the defacement or demolition of their memorials because of religious imagery.

More than 1,400 cases are documented in the full 2017 edition of *Undeniable*, yet this is not an exhaustive accounting. Though this edition includes prior years' cases, the 16.7% increase demonstrates a growing expansion of hostility toward religious expression and conduct. Quantitatively and qualitatively, the hostility is undeniable. And it is dangerous.

The title of this survey, *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America*, exemplifies its purpose: to bring to light the increasing acts of hostility to religion in such a way that even the most uninformed and skeptical person cannot deny that we in America are facing an unprecedented assault on our First Freedom. With each edition, *Undeniable* unfortunately continues to grow.

Here is a summary of the documentation of hostility to religion that you will find in the Public Arena section of the larger survey:

This past year has seen the continuation of high-profile attacks on religious liberty in the public arena. People of faith have been fired, refused employment, or fined for privately praying in the sight of others, for wearing religious attire, and for speaking out about their religious beliefs.

The following are some of the major categories of hostility to religion in the public arena:

Attacks on Companies and Ministries that Oppose Providing Insurance Coverage for Abortion-Inducing Drugs

- *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*
- *Holland v. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
- *Insight for Living Ministries v. Burwell*
- *Christian and Missionary Alliance Foundation, Inc. v. Burwell*
- *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Burwell*
- *Priests for Life v. Burwell*

The year 2016 saw the government continue its threats against religious nonprofit ministries that refuse to fund abortion-inducing drugs as required by Obamacare's "HHS Mandate." The HHS Mandate is a federal regulation that requires any company or organization that provides group health insurance to also fund insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs such as Plan B (the "day-after pill") and Ella (the "week-after pill"). Many nonprofit ministries with religious convictions against funding abortions are being forced to sue the government to avoid having to either violate their religious beliefs or go out of business. While Hobby Lobby was able to successfully challenge the HHS Mandate's application against closely-held for-profit companies in the 2015 Supreme Court case *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.*, that ruling did not extend to religious nonprofit organizations, which have now become the remaining target of the government's attacks.

The cases cited above are representative of the over 100 lawsuits filed by both for-profit companies and nonprofit ministries that opposed

being forced by the federal government to fund abortion-inducing drugs against their religious beliefs

Attacks on Public Speech and Expression

- *Eric Walsh v. Georgia Department of Public Health*

In 2014, the State of Georgia enthusiastically hired Dr. Walsh as a senior official in the state's Department of Public Health. After conducting a review of sermons Dr. Walsh preached at his local church as a lay preacher, Georgia terminated him. Dr. Walsh filed a charge of discrimination with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against Georgia for unlawfully terminating him based solely on his religious beliefs. Georgia settled with Dr. Walsh for almost a quarter-of-a-million dollars.

- *Barton v. City of Balch Springs*

In *Barton v. City of Balch Springs*, city officials told senior citizens at a senior center that they could not pray before their meals, listen to religious messages, or sing gospel songs because religion was banned in public buildings. After the senior citizens filed a lawsuit, government officials told the senior citizens that if they won their lawsuit their meals would be taken away because praying over government-funded meals violated the "separation of church and state."

- *Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin et al. v. City of Austin*

The City of Austin, Texas, passed an ordinance on Good Friday in April 2010 requiring pregnancy resource centers that oppose abortion and certain forms of birth control to post false and misleading signs at their front entrances. Facilities that provide abortions, however, were not required to post any signs or disclaimers. First Liberty Institute—then Liberty Institute—represented three such faith-based pregnancy resource centers and brought a federal lawsuit to stop the City of Austin from requiring the posting of false and misleading signs. A federal district court held that Austin's ordinance was unconstitutional, and Austin was forced to pay almost a half-million dollars as a result of their violation of the pregnancy resource cen-

ters' constitutional rights continue their religious practice. The court battle continues, however.

Attacks on Ten Commandments Displays

- *Van Orden v. Perry*
- *McCreary County v. ACLU*
- *Prescott v. Oklahoma Capitol Preservation Commission*
- *American Atheists v. Thompson*

These cases involve challenges to Ten Commandments displays at the Texas capitol, in a courthouse in Kentucky, and at the Oklahoma capitol. The U.S. Supreme Court heard both the Texas and the Kentucky cases at the same time and held that the Texas display was permissible because there were other, secular monuments around it, while the Kentucky display was impermissible because there were insufficient secular displays nearby. First Liberty Institute successfully defended the Oklahoma Ten Commandments display at the federal court level, but the Oklahoma Supreme Court held that the Ten Commandments display violated the Oklahoma Constitution in a state court proceeding.

Attacks on Public Invocations

- *Town of Greece, New York v. Galloway*
- *Atheists of Florida, Inc. v. City of Lakeland, Florida*
- *Lund v. Rowan County, North Carolina*

These cases involve challenges to legislative assemblies opening with prayer. In *Marsh v. Chambers*, a 1983 U.S. Supreme Court case on legislative prayer, the Court noted that Congress has opened with prayer since the founding of the United States and that Congress hired a chaplain to give these opening prayers the same week that it passed the First Amendment. Despite the historical evidence and the U.S. Supreme Court's holding that legislative prayer is constitutional, threats and lawsuits challenging these prayers are growing more frequent. In *Atheists of Florida, Inc. v. City of Lakeland, Florida*, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals followed the Supreme Court's decision in *Marsh v. Chambers* and upheld a city commission's practice of opening each meeting with a prayer. In *Town of Greece, New York v. Galloway*, however, the Second Circuit Court of Ap-



Executive Summary

peals rejected the Supreme Court's decision in *Marsh v. Chambers* and struck down legislative prayer. The Supreme Court reversed the Second Circuit in a landmark decision upholding the historical practice of legislative prayer and ensuring that government cannot censor the content of a prayer.

After the Supreme Court reaffirmed the constitutionality of legislative prayer in *Town of Greece*, the ACLU sued the commissioners of Rowan County, North Carolina, for opening their sessions in legislative prayer. First Liberty Institute defended the Rowan County commissioners and won at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which held that their practice of legislative prayer “falls within our recognized tradition and does not coerce participation by nonadherents. It is therefore constitutional.” Nevertheless, in late 2016, the full Fourth Circuit granted another appeal—known as an en banc review—of the constitutionality of these legislative prayers. First Liberty Institute is continuing to represent the Rowan County commissioners and to defend the commissioners' practice of opening sessions with prayer.

There Is Hope, If . . .

While this 2017 edition of *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America* shows that attacks on religious liberty continued to increase in the United States throughout 2016, both in the frequency and in the severity of the attacks, this survey also shows that those persons and organizations who stand up for religious liberty win when they fight. In addition, many people argue that concerns about religious freedom and the future of the Supreme Court were also responsible for the dramatic outcome of the presidential election in 2016. As more and more Americans become aware of the growing attacks on religious liberty and learn about what their rights are, they can stand and turn back the tides of secularism and hostility that have so eroded religious liberty—America's First Freedom.



ATTACKS IN THE
PUBLIC ARENA

FIRST  LIBERTY

Muslim Inmate Preventing from Having a Beard While Other Inmates Are Allowed Beards

Holt v. Hobbs, 135 S. Ct. 853 (2015)

Gregory Holt is a Muslim inmate in a prison operated by the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC). Because of his Muslim beliefs, Mr. Holt sought permission to maintain a short beard. ADC refused to allow Mr. Holt to have a short beard, even though ADC does allow inmates to have beards for other purposes, such as skin conditions. Mr. Holt challenged ADC's refusal to permit him to grow a beard under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which was designed to stop religious discrimination against prisoners. The U.S. Supreme Court held that ADC violated Mr. Holt's rights under RLUIPA, and he may now wear a beard.

Abercrombie & Fitch Refuses to Hire Woman Because of Her Religious Attire

EEOC v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc., 135 S. Ct. 2028 (2015)

Samantha Elauf, a Muslim woman, sought employment at Abercrombie & Fitch. As a practicing Muslim, Elauf wears a headscarf. Abercrombie & Fitch imposes a "Look Policy" on its employees to maintain a consistent image across stores. Abercrombie & Fitch determined that Elauf's headscarf—like all other headwear—was not permitted by its "Look Policy." Because of Abercrombie & Fitch's determination, it refused to hire Elauf. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission brought a lawsuit on Elauf's behalf against Abercrombie & Fitch. The lawsuit went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which held that Abercrombie & Fitch's refusal to hire Elauf because of her religious attire violated her rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Religious Convictions Trump Government Mandate to Fund Abortifacient Drugs

Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., and Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp. v. Burwell, 573 U.S. ____ (2014)

In implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare," the Department of Health and Human Services issued a mandate (the "HHS Mandate") that requires every organization, except churches, that provides group health insurance to provide, directly or indirectly, for abortifacients such as Plan B (the "day-after pill") and Ella (the "week-after pill"). Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., and Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp., for-profit Christian organizations, objected to being forced to fund these abortifacients. Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood sued the federal government and argued that the HHS Mandate violates these organizations'

religious liberty rights. The U.S. Supreme Court held that closely-held for-profit corporations like Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood are entitled to religious liberty protections and do not have to fund abortifacient drugs if doing so would violate sincerely held religious beliefs.

Right to Pray Before Government Meetings Without Government Censorship Protected

Town of Greece, New York v. Galloway, 134 S. Ct. 1811 (2014)

The Town of Greece, New York, was sued for opening town board meetings with a prayer. The district court upheld the prayers, but the Second Circuit reversed, holding that the prayers “impermissibly affiliated the town with a single creed, Christianity,” because most of the prayers before the town board—along with most of the churches in the town—were Christian. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed the Second Circuit and held that the prayers are constitutional and that the government cannot interfere in the content of the prayers or require an artificial diversity of religions. The Supreme Court made clear that the government cannot require “non-sectarian” prayers but must allow each person who prays to pray according to that person’s conscience.

World War I Veterans Memorial Preserved from Being Demolished

Salazar v. Buono, 130 S. Ct. 1803 (2010)

A former U.S. Park Service employee filed a lawsuit objecting to the World War I Mojave Desert Cross Veterans Memorial. In 2010, overturning a decision of the Ninth Circuit, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Mojave Desert Cross Veterans Memorial could remain and the land could be transferred from the U.S. government to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in order to preserve this veterans memorial. After a remand of the case to the federal district court, the Plaintiff (represented by the ACLU) and the U.S. government entered into a settlement paving the way for completion of the land transfer.

Right of Local Communities to Choose Which Monuments to Display Protected

Pleasant Grove City et al. v. Summum, 555 U.S. 460 (2009)

After Pleasant Grove City, Utah, rejected Summum’s offer to place a religious monument reflecting The Seven Aphorisms of Summum in a local public park, the organization filed suit. The Tenth Circuit Court ruled in favor of Summum, arguing that cities must allow all privately donated monuments in public areas, regardless of the monument’s message or purpose, or not allow any monuments at all. In 2009, the Supreme Court overturned the

Circuit Court's decision, ruling in favor of a city's ability to choose whether or not a monument could be erected on city property.

Prisoners' Religious Freedoms Protected

Cutter v. Wilkinson, 544 U.S. 709 (2005)

Current and former Ohio prison inmates filed suit when prison officials would not accommodate their exercise of religion. The lower courts split over whether the government needed to accommodate the inmates' exercise of religion. The Supreme Court's ruling indicated that the government's accommodation of individual exercise of religion did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Texas Ten Commandments Monument Allowed to Remain

Van Orden v. Perry, 545 U.S. 677 (2005)

An atheist filed suit against the State of Texas to have the Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the state Capitol removed. The Fraternal Order of Eagles donated the monument many years ago to the State of Texas as a symbol to battle against juvenile delinquency. SCOTUS held (declining to use the notorious *Lemon* test) that this did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Ten Commandments Displays in Kentucky Ordered Removed

McCreary County v. ACLU, 545 U.S. 844 (2005)

The ACLU filed suit to challenge Ten Commandment displays in three Kentucky county courthouses, seeking to have the displays removed. Both the Sixth Circuit of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Ten Commandments displays were unconstitutional.

"Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance Does Not Violate the Establishment Clause

Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow, 542 U.S. 1 (2004)

Atheist Michael Newdow filed suit to remove the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. Newdow's daughter attended public elementary school where students recited the Pledge as part of the morning activities. Newdow filed suit claiming that his daughter was injured because she was compelled to witness her teacher lead her classmates in a ritual where they proclaimed there is a God and that our nation is under God. The Supreme Court held that Newdow lacked standing to challenge the constitutionality of the district's court policy in federal court.

Government Cannot Discriminate in Public Displays Solely on the Basis of Religious Viewpoint

Capitol Square Review & Advisory Board v. Pinette, 515 U.S. 753 (1995)

The Ohio State Capitol Square Review Board refused a permit to a group wanting to display a cross during the 1993 Christmas season, so a lawsuit was filed, seeking an injunction requiring the board to issue the permit. The District Court granted the injunction, the Sixth Circuit affirmed, and the Supreme Court held that issuing such a permit did not violate the Establishment Clause.

ACLU Challenges Christmas and Hanukkah Displays

County of Allegheny v. ACLU, 492 U.S. 573 (1989)

The ACLU filed a lawsuit against the county stating two of the county's holiday displays were unconstitutional. One of the displays was a Nativity scene at the county courthouse. The other display was a menorah placed alongside a Christmas tree at the City-County Building. The Supreme Court held that a menorah in front of the City-County Building for a seasonal display did not violate the Establishment Clause, though the Nativity scene in the county courthouse did.

Christmas Display Challenged for Including Nativity Scene

Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 668 (1984)

In a Pawtucket shopping district, there was an annual Christmas display owned by a nonprofit organization. The display included a Santa house, a Christmas tree, a "Seasons Greetings" banner, and a Nativity scene, which had been a staple of the display for over forty years. A lawsuit was filed to challenge the display, specifically the inclusion of the Nativity scene. The U.S. Supreme Court held the display did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Prayer Before a Legislative Meeting Challenged and Upheld

Marsh v. Chambers, 463 U.S. 783 (1983)

A member of the Nebraska legislature filed suit challenging the longstanding practice of employing a chaplain to pray before the opening of each legislative session, claiming the practice was unconstitutional. The District Court of Nebraska enjoined the chaplaincy practice, and the Eighth Circuit affirmed. The Supreme Court reversed, holding that legislative prayers do not violate the Establishment Clause.

Bloomfield, New Mexico, Ten Commandments Monument Ordered Removed

Felix v. City of Bloomfield, No. 14-2149 (10th Cir. 2016)

A former city councilman in Bloomfield, New Mexico, erected a Ten Commandments monument on the city hall lawn. Two Wiccans, who never read the monument, sued to have it removed. A federal district court held that the monument's existence on the city hall lawn was impermissible and ordered it removed. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit agreed, but some judges, in dissent, argued that passive Ten Commandments monuments are not establishments of religion.

Muslim Inmate in Pennsylvania Harassed for Religious Beliefs and Fired for Objecting to Harassment

Mack v. Warden Loretto FCI, No. 14-2738 (3d Cir. 2016)

Charles Mack was a Muslim inmate at the Federal Correctional Institution in Loretto, Pennsylvania. Mack worked for pay in the prison's commissary from May 2009 to October 2009. As a Muslim, Mack was permitted to pray during breaks and to avoid handling pork products. Two correctional officers at the prison, however, began to harass Mack. One officer put a note saying, "I LOVE BACON" on Mack's back. When Mack complained about the treatment, the officer said, "[T]here is no good Muslim, except a dead Muslim!" Because of Mack's fear of the officers, he stopped praying while at the commissary and waited until he got off work. Mack spoke with the officers' supervisor about the harassment. One week later, Mack was fired. Mack sued the prison and the officers for engaging in religious harassment and retaliation. The federal district court dismissed all of Mack's claims, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit allowed some of Mr. Mack's claims (his claim of retaliation and his claims against the individual officers) to proceed under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The lawsuit is ongoing.

Kansas Police Order Woman to Stop Praying in Her Own Home

Sause v. Bauer, No. 16-3231 (10th Cir., filed Sept. 28, 2016)

Mary Ann Sause was home at night when two police officers demanded to be let into her apartment but would not give Sause a reason. Sause showed them a copy of the U.S. Constitution, but one of the officers said it was "just a piece of paper" that "doesn't work here." Once inside Sause's home, one of the officers told Sause that she would be going to jail, but they just did not know why yet. One of the officers went into another room, and Sause asked the remaining officer if she could kneel down and pray. He gave her

permission to pray, but when the officer who had been looking around the apartment returned, the returning officer ordered her to stop praying. After over an hour, the officers finally issued Sause two citations and left. Only as they were leaving did they tell Sause that they came to investigate a noise complaint—a neighbor had complained about the volume of Sause’s radio. Sause sued for this violation of her rights, but the federal district court dismissed Sause’s lawsuit. First Liberty Institute is now representing Sause on appeal and is seeking to vindicate her religious liberty rights.

Missouri State Senator Challenges Obamacare’s Requirement to Purchase Insurance Coverage for Contraceptives

Wieland v. U.S. Dep’t of Health and Human Services, No. 16-3831 (8th Cir., filed Sept. 16, 2016)

Missouri State Senator Paul Wieland sued the federal government so that he would not be compelled under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) to pay for group health insurance for his family that covers drugs and services that the Wielands hold religious objections to providing. A federal district court held that the federal government violated the Wielands’ religious rights, but the United States has appealed the decision. The appeal is ongoing.

Florida Refuses to Provide Kosher Meals to Inmates

United States v. Secretary, Florida Department of Corrections, No. 15-14117 (11th Cir. 2016)

Florida refused to provide kosher meals for inmates in state prisons. The United States sued Florida for violating the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act in refusing kosher diets while providing vegan and therapeutic diets. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit agreed that this was a violation and held that Florida must provide kosher meals to inmates who have sincere religious beliefs requiring such meals.

Illinois Prison Bans Inmate from Wearing Religious Medallion

Knowles v. Pfister, No. 15-1703 (7th Cir. 2016)

Gilbert Knowles was a Wiccan and an inmate in Illinois’s Pontiac Correctional Center. As a Wiccan, Knowles wanted to wear a “pentacle medallion” to “protect his body and his spirit against harm, evil entities, and negative energy.” A federal district judge refused to issue an injunction against the prison because Knowles could continue to practice his religion in other ways. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, however, reversed that decision and found that the prison was likely in violation of the Religious Land

Use and Institutionalized Persons Act for substantially burdening Knowles's religious practice without a compelling interest.

Irish Fair of Minnesota Bans Religious Materials

Miller v. City of St. Paul, 823 F.3d 503 (8th Cir. 2016)

David Miller, a Christian, wanted to share his faith and hand out religious flyers outside of the entrance to the Irish Fair of Minnesota in St. Paul. A police officer threatened to confiscate Miller's signs and told Miller that he could not share his faith or hand out flyers at the fair. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit held that Miller could pursue a lawsuit against the police officer in the officer's individual capacity.

County Commissioners Ordered to Stop Prayers

Lund v. Rowan Cty., 837 F.3d 407 (4th Cir. 2016)

Rowan County Board of Commissioners has operated for over forty years under a policy permitting each board member (on a rotating basis) an opportunity to open the board's meeting with prayer. The ACLU filed a lawsuit against the county seeking to eliminate this practice because its representatives have largely been Christian, and thus most of the prayers offered have been Christian. A federal district court granted a preliminary injunction stopping the Rowan County Board of Commissioners from opening with "sectarian" prayers but the Fourth Circuit, following the Supreme Court's decision in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, reversed and allowed the prayers. The case is to be reheard *en banc* by the Fourth Circuit.

California Threatens 10,000 Year-Old Native American Practices

Pit River Tribe v. BLM, 793 F.3d 1147 (9th Cir. 2015)

A Native American Tribe has challenged twenty-six geothermal leases in California's Medicine Lake Highlands national forests. For at least 10,000 years, members of the Pit River Tribe have used the area for religious activities, such as vision quests, prayers, and ceremonies. The geothermal development projects threaten the continued use of their land at the lake and highlands.

Alabama Forces Native American Inmate to Cut Hair

Knight v. Thompson, 796 F.3d 1289 (11th Cir. 2015)

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals upheld an Alabama prison policy requiring male inmates to keep their hair short. Alabama refused to grant an exception for Native American inmates to wear long hair in accordance with their religious beliefs. Even though the Supreme Court in *Holt v. Hobbs* found that a prison must permit a Muslim inmate to grow a beard, the Eleventh Circuit sided against the Native American inmate.

Florida Prisons Deny Navajo Religious Observer Venison and Religious Headband

Schlemm v. Wall, No. 14-2604 (7th Cir., Apr. 21, 2015)

The Florida Department of Corrections denied David Schlemm, a follower of the Navajo religion, venison for him to celebrate the Ghost Feast, a religious celebration. The department of corrections also denied Schlemm access to a religious headband. Schlemm filed a lawsuit against the secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections to defend his religious liberty rights. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit held that the Florida Department of Corrections violated Schlemm's religious rights and ordered that he be provided with venison for the Ghost Feast and a religious headband.

Use of "In God We Trust" on Currency Challenged

Newdow v. Peterson, 753 F.3d 105 (2d Cir. 2014)

Newdow filed a lawsuit challenging the use of the phrase "In God We Trust" on U.S. currency. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit held that including "In God We Trust" on coins and bills does not violate the First Amendment or the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Atheist Group Opposes 9/11 Cross Made from Steel Girders that Survived the Attack

American Atheists, Inc. v. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, 760 F.3d 227 (2d Cir. 2014)

Atheists sued to stop the erection of the World Trade Center cross. They claim the cross, made of two steel girders that survived the September 11th attack, has become a symbol of religion and thus needs to be removed because it now violates the Establishment Clause. A federal district court in New York dismissed the lawsuit, and the Second Circuit affirmed the dismissal.

Muslim Inmate Denied Access to Religious Literature and Ability to Fast

Wall v. Wade, 741 F.3d 492 (4th Cir. 2014)

Officials in the Red Onion State Prison refused to allow Gary Wall, a Muslim, to participate in Ramadan because he could not produce literature to substantiate his claim to be a practicing Muslim. Wall could not prove that he was a practicing Muslim because his property was confiscated during a prison transfer. Prison officials also did not permit him to follow the ritual fasting required by his Islamic beliefs. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has allowed Hall's lawsuit against the prison to proceed.

Native American Inmate Denied Ability to Perform Religious Ceremony

Native Am. Council of Tribes v. Weber, No. 13-1401, 2014 WL 1644130 (8th Cir. 2014)

When the South Dakota Department of Corrections (SDDOC) changed its policy to completely ban the use of tobacco by Native American inmates during their religious ceremonies, an inmate brought a lawsuit against the discriminatory ban. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit found in the inmate's favor and affirmed the district court's order against the SDDOC granting injunctive relief for the burden on Native American inmates' religious freedom.

Prison Officials Refuse to Even Attempt Religious Accommodation

Yellowbear v. Lampert, 741 F.3d 48 (10th Cir. 2014)

Yellowbear sought use of a sweat lodge on the prison property in order to practice his religion. When prison officials made no sincere effort to accommodate his request for such activity, Yellowbear sought relief under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit allowed Yellowbear's suit to continue.

Jewish Inmate Denied Kosher Diet and Prayer Group

LeBaron v. Spencer, 527 Fed. Appx. 25 (1st Cir. 2013)

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit allowed a Messianic Jewish inmate to proceed with his First Amendment and RLUIPA challenges seeking a sufficient kosher diet and access to a Messianic synagogue and group prayer. This case is currently pending.

Company Director Fired for Religious Conversion

Mariotti v. Mariotti Building Products, Inc., No. 11-3148 (3d Cir. 2013)

Mariotti Building Products, a Pennsylvania business, ousted one of its director-officers following his religious conversion. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals held that Title VII provides no protection to director-officers from religious discrimination.

Security Officer Prohibited from Wearing Religiously-Mandated Clothing

Finnie v. Lee County, Miss., 541 F. Appx. 368 (5th Cir. 2013)

After working as a security officer for a juvenile detention center in Lee County, Mississippi, for almost four years, Crystal Finnie began following the Pentecostal faith, which required her to wear skirts instead of pants. However, Finnie's employer refused to accommodate her request for a religious exemption from the dress code. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on Finnie's behalf, but the court dismissed all of her claims.

IRS Refuses to Allow Three-Inch Ceremonial Knife But Permits Pocket Knives

Tagore v. United States, 735 F.3d 324 (5th Cir. 2013)

After being hired by the IRS, Kawaljeet Tagore was baptized into the Sikh religion and began wearing a small, blunted sword called a kirpan in accordance with the religion's requirements. However, the three-inch blade was half an inch longer than allowed under the "pocket knife exemption" for knives allowed in federal buildings. Tagore applied for a security waiver, but his application was denied. The IRS then fired Tagore when she continued to adhere to her religious requirements by wearing the kirpan. Tagore subsequently brought a lawsuit for the IRS's failure to accommodate her religion, but a Texas federal court ruled against her. Upon appeal, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals remanded the case back to the district court to assess whether Tagore's sincere religious beliefs prohibit her from wearing a kirpan that adheres to federal requirements.

Bus Driver Fired for Keeping the Sabbath

Antoine v. First Student, Inc., No. 11-31126 (5th Cir. filed Apr. 10, 2013)

Robert Antoine, a Seventh-day Adventist school bus driver, requested to not work on Friday nights to observe the Sabbath. Antoine's employer, First Students, Inc., did not follow up with its offer to swap shifts. When Antoine failed to report for work on Friday nights, he was relieved for absenteeism. Antoine brought a religious discrimination suit against his former employer. The case is ongoing.

Government Attempts to Deport Family Fleeing Persecution for Religious Beliefs

Romeike v. Holder, No. 12-3641 (6th Cir. 2013)

The U.S. Justice Department revoked asylum granted to a Christian family from Germany. The family fled to the United States to avoid a Nazi-era law meant to eliminate philosophies and religions inconsistent with state ideology by banning primary education outside public schools. When the Romeike family tried to homeschool its kids to provide religious education, it was slapped with oppressive fines and German authorities forcibly removed the children to public school. The U.S. federal government opposed the family's asylum in the U.S., arguing that parents do not have a fundamental right to choose their children's education, even when public schools insist on a curriculum offensive to the family's religious beliefs. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals accepted the government's arguments, and the Supreme Court refused to hear the Romeike's appeal. Following the Supreme Court's denial

of the appeal, the Department of Homeland Security suddenly reversed its decision and permitted the Romeikes to remain in the United States.

Christian Banned from Distributing Bibles During Gay Pride Festival

Johnson v. Minneapolis Park & Recreation Bd., 729 F.3d 1094 (8th Cir. 2013)

Every year, Twin Cities Pride, a LGBT advocacy group, hosts a gay pride festival in a public park in downtown Minneapolis. Subject to city approval, vendors of all kinds are allowed to set up booths in order to sell their wares to the public. However, when Brian Johnson, an evangelical Christian, requested a booth to distribute Bibles, the city denied his application and proceeded to pass an ordinance that limited the distribution of materials in booths and throughout the park. Johnson then filed a lawsuit to request an injunction against the discriminatory regulation. In a 2-1 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit reversed the district court's original denial of Johnson's request.

Prayers Before City Council Meetings Challenged

Rubin v. City of Lancaster, 710 F.3d 1087 (9th Cir. 2013)

The city of Lancaster, California, invites all religious congregations in the community to volunteer up to three times per year to give a non-proselytizing, non-disparaging invocation before city-council meetings. Representatives from four different religious traditions have participated. Two persons brought a lawsuit challenging the prayers. A federal district court in California upheld the invocation policy, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed, holding that the prayers are permissible and the government cannot censor the persons who pray before the meetings.

Clothier Refuses to Hire Muslim Because Her Headscarf Violates Company "Look Policy"

E.E.O.C. v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc., 731 F.3d 1106 (10th Cir. 2013)

Samantha Elauf, a practicing Muslim, interviewed for a model position at an Abercrombie & Fitch retail store in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Although Elauf's initial interviewing score with the store manager justified an offer of employment, the manager informed Elauf that they would not hire her because her hijab (a religious headscarf required for modesty purposes) conflicted with the store's "look policy." Elauf filed a lawsuit for Abercrombie's failure to provide a religious exemption, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit reversed the district court's initial decision for Elauf and instead ruled in Abercrombie's favor.

Atheist Group Sues Florida City for Refusing to Censor Prayers

Atheists of Florida, Inc. v. City of Lakeland, Florida, 713 F.3d 577 (11th Cir. 2013)
A group called the Atheists of Florida sued the City of Lakeland, Florida, for opening each city commission meeting with a prayer. The city sent invitations to pray to all of the religious groups in the city. Atheists of Florida argued, however, that the prayers violated the Establishment Clause because some of the persons who prayed did so “in the name of Jesus Christ” or to “the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” A federal district court held that just because some of the persons invited to pray give Christian prayers, it does not mean that the city’s policy violates the Establishment Clause. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed.

Christians Stopped from Sharing Their Faith at a Festival Without a Permit

Bays v. City of Fairborn, 668 F.3d 814 (6th Cir. 2012)
Two Christian men were prevented from presenting the gospel at a Festival in Fairborn, Ohio, because they did not have a permit. The Sixth Circuit held that the policy was unconstitutional because it was not narrowly tailored to serve a significant government interest.

Atheist Sues to Stop Grant for Restoration of Cross

Sherman v. Illinois, 682 F.3d 643 (7th Cir. 2012)
An atheist sued Illinois claiming a violation of the Establishment Clause when the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity granted \$20,000 to a nonprofit group to restore a 111-foot-tall Latin cross. The court dismissed the claim for lack of taxpayer standing.

Atheist and Agnostic Group Sues City to Remove Ten Commandments Display

Red River Freethinkers v. City of Fargo, 679 F.3d 1015 (8th Cir. 2012)
In 1961, the Fraternal Order of Eagles—a nonreligious organization—donated a Ten Commandments monument to Fargo, North Dakota. The city installed it on city property. In 2002, forty-one years later, the Red River Freethinkers, a group dedicated to promoting atheistic and agnostic views, sued the city after the city declined to accept a monument donated by the Freethinkers. The Freethinkers claimed the Ten Commandments display and the city’s decision not to accept the Freethinker’s monument constituted a violation of the Establishment Clause. A federal district court dismissed the lawsuit, but the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court, allowing the case to continue.

Christian Counselor Fired for Referring Homosexual Clients to Other Counselors

Walden v. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 669 F.3d 1277 (11th Cir. 2012)
A Christian counselor for the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Marcia Walden, was fired because she refused to lie about why she was referring clients with same-sex relationship problems to other counselors. Walden told a homosexual client that her personal values would interfere with the client/therapist relationship, never mentioning her religious objections. In response, the client complained to the CDC that Walden was homophobic. Walden reiterated to her supervisors that she had no problem counseling homosexual individuals, but her religious beliefs prevented her from conducting relationship counseling for those in homosexual relationships. Her supervisors suggested that she lie to homosexual clients and tell them she did not have much experience with relationship counseling. Walden refused to lie about why she was referring clients and was ultimately fired for not “altering her approach.” The Eleventh Circuit rejected claims that Walden’s free exercise rights were violated under the First Amendment, affirming the district court’s summary judgment ruling against her.

Prayers Before Forsyth County Board of Commissioners Stopped for Being Too Christian

Joyner v. Forsyth County, North Carolina, 653 F.3d 341 (4th Cir. 2011)
The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a county policy permitting any community religious congregation to lead invocation at the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners because too many of the prayers being offered were Christian.

Religious Tracts Banned from Arab Festival

Saieg v. City of Dearborn, 641 F.3d 727 (6th Cir. 2011)
Dearborn, Michigan, instituted a new policy prohibiting the distribution of leaflets in and around the Arab International Festival. Saieg, founder of the Arabic Christian Perspective (ACP), wanted to distribute religious tracts to Muslims at the festival. Dearborn provided ACP with a booth at the festival from which to distribute tracts, but prohibited Saieg from distributing tracts outside of the booth. The Sixth Circuit held that Dearborn’s restrictions on distributing flyers in and around the festival violated Saieg’s free speech rights.

Ohio Judge Sued for Having Poster of the Ten Commandments

DeWeese v. ACLU of Ohio, 545 U.S. 1152 (2005)

American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio Foundation, Inc. v. DeWeese, 633 F.3d 424 (6th Cir. 2011)

In 2001, the ACLU of Ohio sued Judge DeWeese for displaying a poster of the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. In July 2004, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit upheld the decision of a lower court that ruled that the poster was unconstitutional. In June 2005, the Supreme Court refused to hear the case, allowing the ruling of the Sixth Circuit to stand. Following these cases, Judge DeWeese hung a replacement poster, which contrasted “moral absolute” principles, as expressed in the Ten Commandments, with “moral relativist” principles. The Sixth Circuit again ruled that the poster was unconstitutional.

Atheist Group Sues to Stop the National Day of Prayer

Freedom from Religion Foundation, Inc. v. Obama, 641 F.3d 803 (7th Cir. 2011)

The Freedom from Religion Foundation sued to have the National Day of Prayer declared unconstitutional. The district court held that declaring a National Day of Prayer violates the Establishment Clause and prohibited such declarations. The Seventh Circuit reversed.

Christian Banned from Distributing Religious Flyers at Mt. Rushmore

Boardley v. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 615 F.3d 508 (D.C. Cir. 2010)

Boardley, a Christian evangelist, brought a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of the Interior for restricting him from passing out gospel tracts at Mt. Rushmore National Park. The appellate court found the national park policy against distributing materials was overbroad and unreasonable.

Atheists Sue to Stop Use of the Phrase, “So Help Me God” in Presidential Oath

Newdow v. Roberts, 603 F.3d 1002 (D.C. Cir. 2010)

Michael Newdow and approximately thirty other atheists filed suit to challenge the phrase “so help me God” when used in the oath at the presidential inauguration. The federal district court dismissed the lawsuit, and the D.C. Circuit affirmed.

Nurse Forced to Participate in Late-Term Abortion Against Her Religious Beliefs

Cenzon-DeCarlo v. Mount Sinai Hospital, 626 F.3d 695 (2d Cir. 2010)

A nurse at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York was forced to participate in a late-term abortion against her conscience and religious convictions. She was

threatened with severe penalties including termination and loss of license if she refused to participate in the abortion. Following a request from her attorneys, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services investigated the hospital for civil rights violations. Mount Sinai Hospital now has a policy that no person can be forced to participate in an abortion against that person's conscience.

Vermont Resident Denied Religious Message on License Plate

Byrne v. Rutledge, 623 F.3d 46 (2nd Cir. 2010)

Vermont resident Byrne applied for a “vanity” license plate that had a combination of letters and numbers that could be interpreted as a Bible verse. The state refused to give Byrne that license plate because of the religious content. Byrne filed suit against the state commissioner. The Second Circuit found that the state was wrong to limit Byrne's ability to put religious content on his license plate and that there was no legitimate government interest served by their action.

“Under God” Challenged in Texas Pledge of Allegiance

Croft v. Perry, 624 F.3d 157 (5th Cir. 2010)

The Crofts, parents of school-age children, challenged the phrase “under God” in the Texas Pledge of Allegiance. The district court and the Fifth Circuit both held that the Texas Pledge was constitutional.

ACLU Sues to Censor Historical Documents from County Courthouse

ACLU of Kentucky v. Grayson County, 591 F.3d 837 (6th Cir. 2010)

The ACLU challenged a county courthouse display containing various historical documents about the founding of America and the Ten Commandments. The district court censored the use of the Ten Commandments in the display, but the Sixth Circuit reversed, holding that the Ten Commandments display does not violate the Establishment Clause.

Atheist Sues to Stop Pledge of Allegiance Recitations in Daughter's Classroom

Newdow v. Rio Linda Union School District, 597 F.3d 1007 (9th Cir. 2010)

A parent of a student in Rio Linda Union School District, California, sued to prohibit the recitation of the pledge by all students in her child's classroom. A self-professed atheist, the parent acknowledged that her child had never said the pledge. The court below held that the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance violated the Establishment Clause and prohibited its recitation. However, the Ninth Circuit overruled that decision on March 11, 2010, be-

cause the purpose of the pledge was patriotic, not an attempt to impress a religious doctrine on anyone.

Atheist Group Sues to Remove Memorial Crosses Placed in Memory of Fallen Patrolmen

American Atheists, Inc. v. Duncan, 637 F.3d 1095 (10th Cir. 2010)

An atheist group filed suit in federal court claiming that allowing the Utah Highway Patrol Association to erect memorial crosses bearing its logo on state property in memory of fallen patrolmen violated the U.S. Constitution. The Tenth Circuit held that the crosses violate the Establishment Clause.

Couple Fired and Evicted for Having a Picture with a Religious Reference

Dixon v. The Hallmark Companies, Inc., 627 F.3d 849 (11th Cir. 2010)

Daniel and Sharon Dixon managed an apartment complex. In the apartment office, the Dixons placed a stained glass piece of artwork that had a picture of lilies and contained the words “Consider the lilies... Matthew 6:28.” The Dixons’ supervisor, upon seeing the stained glass artwork, fired the Dixons and evicted them from their apartment for being “too religious.” The Dixons sued, and the case settled.

Pharmacy Appeals to Supreme Court to Protect Conscience Rights

Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky, 586 F.3d 1109 (9th Cir. 2009)

The Stormans family, who run Ralph’s Thriftway in Olympia, Washington, have religious beliefs against dispensing abortion-causing drugs. The Ninth Circuit, however, has ordered the pharmacy to dispense these drugs. The Stormans appealed to the Supreme Court to protect their right to follow their conscience rather than be forced to be complicit in ending a human life, but the Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

ACLU Sues to Remove Ten Commandments and Mayflower Compact from Courthouse Lawn

Green v. Haskell County Board of Commissioners, 568 F.3d 784 (10th Cir. 2009)

James Green and the ACLU filed a lawsuit to have a monument of the Ten Commandments and the Mayflower Compact removed from the Haskell County courthouse lawn, claiming that the monument violated the Establishment Clause. The monument was erected at the request of a resident of Haskell County, who wanted to honor the historical and legal traditions represented by the monument. The county has a longstanding policy and practice of permitting citizens of Haskell County to display monuments on the county courthouse lawn. The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the monument violated the Establishment Clause.

“Orthodox Catholic” Inmate Denied Kosher Meals

Guzzi v. Thompson, No. 07-1537, 2008 U.S. App. LEXIS 11531 (1st Cir. 2008)
Rosario Guzzi, an inmate at a Massachusetts prison, sued the facility after it denied his request to provide kosher meals in keeping with his “orthodox Catholic” faith. The district court found that Catholicism does not require kosher meals and ruled against Guzzi. The First Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the lower court’s decision, holding that the court had overstepped its bounds in interpreting what constituted “orthodox Catholicism.”

Cobb County Commission Sues to Stop Opening Prayers

Pelphrey v. Cobb County, Georgia, 547 F.3d 1263 (11th Cir. 2008)
A group of taxpayers sued Cobb County, Georgia, because the Cobb County Commission and the Cobb County Planning Commission open in prayers that often include references to particular religions. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals held that under *Marsh v. Chambers*, opening legislative assemblies with prayer is constitutional and that theologians, not courts, should determine what is a “sectarian” prayer.

Harris County, Texas, Sued to Remove Bible from Monument to Philanthropist

Staley v. Harris County, Texas, 485 F.3d 305 (5th Cir. 2007)
A lawsuit was filed against Harris County to have a Bible removed from a portion of a monument dedicated to a prominent and charitable citizen, William S. Mosher. The monument was donated and erected by the Star of Hope Mission, a Christian outreach organization that assists the homeless and jobless in the Houston area. The district court ordered the Bible be removed from the monument and the Court of Appeals panel agreed before the case became moot.

Man Arrested for Preaching Without a Permit

Hood v. Keller, 229 Fed. Appx. 393 (6th Cir. 2007)
A man was arrested for publicly preaching without a permit. He filed a lawsuit seeking declaratory and injunctive relief, compensatory damages, costs, and attorney’s fees from public officials for violating his First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and free exercise of religion.

Faith-Based Child Services Provider Denied Children Because of Religious Content

Teen Ranch, Inc. v. Udow, 479 F.3d 403 (6th Cir. 2007)
A faith-based child services provider filed suit against the Family Independence Agency (FIA) when the FIA decided to discontinue referring children to

the provider based on its incorporation of religion into its programming. The district court ruled in favor of the FIA. On appeal, the court affirmed, stating that funding for placements of children with Teen Ranch would violate the Public Act and the Establishment Clause.

Minister Threatened with Arrest for Preaching Loudly in Public

Deegan v. City of Ithaca, 444 F.3d 135 (2nd Cir. 2006)

The city of Ithaca, New York, warned a minister that he would be arrested if he persisted in preaching loudly in the public commons. The minister sued for First Amendment violations and the court ruled in favor of the city on summary judgment.

Davidson County Sued to Remove Religious Imagery from County Seal

Lambeth v. Board of Commissioners of Davidson County, North Carolina, 407 F.3d 266 (4th Cir. 2005)

A pair of attorneys filed suit claiming that a display of the National Motto on the Davidson County Governmental Center violated the Establishment Clause. The Fourth Circuit held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause under the *Lemon* test.

ACLU Sues to Remove Ten Commandments Display

ACLU Nebraska Foundation v. City of Plattsmouth, 419 F.3d 772 (8th Cir. 2005) (en banc)

The ACLU filed suit complaining that the city's Ten Commandments display violated the Establishment Clause. The display was donated to the city in 1965 by the Fraternal Order of the Eagles. The district court ordered the display removed, determining that it promoted religion. The Eighth Circuit reversed the district court in an en banc decision.

School Board Sued for Displaying Ten Commandments Monuments

Baker v. Adams County / Ohio Valley School Board, 86 Fed. Appx. 104 (6th Cir. 2004)

A school board erected Ten Commandments monuments bought by a county ministerial association, and a suit was filed, challenging the constitutionality of the monuments. The school board added other historical documents relating to the development of American law and government to the displays, but the lawsuit continued anyway. The court ordered that the monuments be removed.

Employee Fired from Hewlett-Packard for Having Scripture in His Cubicle

Peterson v. Hewlett-Packard Co., 358 F.3d 599 (9th Cir. 2004)

A 21-year HP employee was fired for refusing to remove scriptures from his office cubicle opposing homosexuality that he posted in response to a company poster hung in the office that depicted a homosexual employee and sought to encourage tolerance.

Chester County Sued to Remove Ten Commandments Display

Freethought Society v. Chester County, 334 F.3d 247 (3rd Cir. 2003)

A lawsuit was filed to challenge the Ten Commandments display on the county courthouse facade, but the court allowed the display to remain.

Preacher Prohibited from Speaking on Public Sidewalks Without a Permit

Sewell v. City of Jacksonville, 69 Fed. Appx. 989 (11th Cir. 2003)

Reverend Wesley Sewell stood at the local post office on a public sidewalk to share his Christian faith with those who passed by. He used limited amplification: a single ten-inch speaker. He was told he could not use his speaker and that he would have to get a permit to share his faith on the public sidewalk. Police directed Sewell to the director of Parks and Recreation, who told him that no written application or guidelines existed for issuing a permit. Nonetheless, the director said Sewell could only preach in one location with the volume set so low that only people who approached him could hear his message. A lawsuit was filed to protect Rev. Sewell's right to share his beliefs without excessive restriction.

Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court Sued for Displaying Ten Commandments

Grassroth v. Moore, 335 F.3d 1282 (11th Cir. 2003)

Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy S. Moore installed a Ten Commandments monument in the state's judicial building. A lawsuit was filed to challenge the display and the monument was forcibly removed.

Richmost County Sued to Remove Ten Commandments from County Seal

King v. Richmond County, 331 F.3d 1271 (11th Cir. 2003)

A small group of citizens filed suit and claimed that the 130-year-old seal of the Superior Court of Richmond County violated the Establishment Clause and was unconstitutional because the image included a portrayal of the Ten Commandments tablets. The Eleventh Circuit held that the display of the seal did not violate the Establishment Clause under the *Lemon* test.



Kentucky Biblical Heritage Display Attacked as Unconstitutional

Adland v. Russ, 307 F.3d 471 (6th Cir. 2002)

The governor of Kentucky signed a resolution that permitted public school teachers to display the Ten Commandments in their classroom. He also authorized the display of the Ten Commandments monument on Capitol grounds as part of a display that would showcase Kentucky's Biblical historical heritage. Citizens protested the proposed display and filed a lawsuit to challenge the resolution, and the court determined that the proposal was unconstitutional.

Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial Ordered Torn Down

Paulson v. City of San Diego, 294 F.3d 1124 (9th Cir. 2002)

A citizen challenged the constitutionality of a memorial in Mount Soledad Natural Park, which is owned by the City of San Diego. The court found that the city violated the California Constitution by keeping the cross-shaped memorial and forbade the city from maintaining the cross. A stay of the dismantling of the cross was won at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Religious Group Demands Display of Their Monument with Ten Commandments Monument

Summum v. City of Ogden, 297 F.3d 995 (10th Cir. 2002)

The Summum Church asked the City of Ogden to replace a Ten Commandments display that the Fraternal Order of the Eagles had donated to the city with a monument to the Summum religion. The church filed a lawsuit. The Tenth Circuit held that the city discriminated against the church by displaying the Ten Commandments but refusing to display the church's monument and that the city's alleged concern for avoidance of an Establishment Clause violation did not justify rejection of the church's monument.

ACLU Attacks Christmas and Hanukkah Display in New Jersey

ACLU of New Jersey v. Township of Wall, 246 F.3d 258 (3d Cir. 2001)

The ACLU, along with some citizens, filed a lawsuit to challenge a holiday display consisting of a Nativity scene with traditional figures, a lighted tree, urns, candy cane banners, a menorah, and signs commenting on celebrating diversity and freedom. The Third Circuit held that the plaintiffs lacked standing because they failed to show a non-economic injury resulting from the display and that the plaintiffs failed to show that the city spent any money on the display. Vacated and remanded.

ACLU Attacks Ohio State Motto, “With God, All Things Are Possible”

ACLU of Ohio v. Capitol Square Review and Advisory Bd., 243 F.3d 289 (6th Cir. 2001) (en banc)

The ACLU filed a lawsuit challenging Ohio’s motto, “With God, All Things Are Possible.” On a rehearing en banc, the Sixth Circuit held that display of the motto did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Indiana ACLU Stops Indiana from Replacing Vandalized Ten Commandments Display

Indiana Civil Liberties Union v. O’Bannon, 259 F.3d 766 (7th Cir. 2001)

The Fraternal Order of the Eagles donated Ten Commandments plaques to communities across the U.S. in the 1950s, including one to the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis, which was destroyed in 1991 by a vandal. An Indiana State Representative planned a replacement monument consisting of the Ten Commandments, the Bill of Rights, and the Preamble to the Indiana Constitution, but a lawsuit was filed challenging the proposed monument on the grounds that it would establish religion. The Seventh Circuit held that setting up the monument would violate the Establishment clause.

Indiana Ten Commandments Display Attacked

Books v. City of Elkhart, Indiana, 235 F.3d 292 (7th Cir. 2001)

A lawsuit was filed in objection to a Ten Commandments display at the Elkhart’s Municipal Building, claiming the display violated the Establishment Clause. The Seventh Circuit struck down the display.

ACLU Attacks Holiday Display Representing Several Holidays

ACLU of New Jersey v. Schundler, 168 F.3d 92 (3d Cir. 1999)

The ACLU filed suit to challenge a holiday display, which included a Nativity scene and a menorah, claiming the display violated the Establishment Clause. The Third Circuit (Alito, J.) held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause because the city modified the display to include Kwanzaa symbols, a sled, Frosty the Snowman, and Santa Claus.

Lawsuit Challenges Closing Government Offices for Good Friday

Granzeier v. Middleton, 173 F.3d 568 (6th Cir. 1999)

County courthouses and administrative buildings were closed on Good Friday. Plaintiff sued, declaring such a practice unconstitutional. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals found that there was a valid secular purpose in closing on Good Friday and that there was no excessive entanglement of religion between church and state.

Indiana Good Friday Closing Upheld Against Challenge

Bridenbaugh v. O'Bannon, 185 F.3d 796 (7th Cir. 1999)

A citizen filed suit to challenge the Indiana policy of allowing state employees to observe Good Friday as a day off with pay, claiming that the policy established religion. The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals held that this did not violate the Establishment clause.

ACLU Attacks Holiday Display Because It Contains a Nativity Scene

ACLU v. City of Florissant, 186 F.3d 1095 (8th Cir. 1999)

The ACLU filed suit to challenge a holiday display at the city Civic Center in Florissant, Missouri, on behalf of a resident who was offended by the inclusion of a Nativity scene in the holiday display. The Eighth Circuit held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Public School Sells Ad Space but Bans Ten Commandments in Ads

DiLoreto v. Downey Unified School Dist. Bd. of Education, 196 F.3d 958 (9th Cir. 1999)

A school's baseball booster club raised funds by selling ads on the baseball field fence for \$400. Mr. DiLoreto, CEO of Yale Engineering, bought an ad that he wanted to use to display the Ten Commandments, but the sign was rejected and Mr. DiLoreto's money was returned. A lawsuit was filed to protect Mr. DiLoreto from viewpoint discrimination. The Ninth Circuit held that the board's decision to reject the ad was a permissible content-based limitation and not viewpoint discrimination.

Lawsuit Challenges Statute of Aztec God as First Amendment Violation

Alvarado v. City of San Jose, 94 F.3d 1223 (9th Cir. 1996)

The City of San Jose installed and maintained a sculpture of Quetzalcoatl, an Aztec god, to commemorate the Mexican and Spanish contributions to the city's culture. When people began to bring flowers and burn incense at the sculpture, citizens filed a lawsuit claiming the sculpture violated the Establishment Clause, but the court upheld the sculpture.

Teacher Sues to Stop Good Friday Closure

Metzl v. Leininger, 57 F.3d 618 (7th Cir. 1995)

A teacher filed suit in objection to a policy that allowed teachers to take Good Friday off with pay, claiming the practice violated the Establishment Clause. The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals held that state law requiring closures on Good Friday violated the Establishment clause.

Edmond City Seal Declared Unconstitutional for Having a Cross

Robinson v. City of Edmond, 68 F.3d 1226 (10th Cir. 1995)

Plaintiffs filed suit to challenge the use of a Latin or Christian cross on the Edmond city seal, which was adopted in 1965 by a competition through the city council and the local newspapers. The cross reflected the historical importance of the Catholic Church in the development of the Southwest, but the court held that the seal established religion and struck down the use of the cross.

ACLU Attacks Menorah Placed in Plaza for Hanukkah

Americans United for Separation of Church and State v. City of Grand Rapids, 980 F.2d 1538 (6th Cir. 1992)

Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed suit to prevent a menorah from being placed at Calder Plaza during the Hanukkah celebration, claiming the placement of the menorah established religion. The court agreed, determining that the city appeared to be endorsing religion because of the display. On a rehearing en banc, the Sixth Circuit held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Attacks Austin City Insignia for Including a Cross

Murray v. City of Austin, 947 F.2d 147 (5th Cir. 1991)

The Society of Separationists filed suit challenging Austin's city insignia because it included a cross, but the court upheld the city's insignia against the censorship attempt.

Illinois Cities Sued to Ban Use of Cross in City Seals

Harris v. City of Zion, 927 F.2d 1401 (7th Cir. 1991)

The Society of Separationists and some other plaintiffs challenged the use of religious symbols on city seals in Rolling Meadows and Zion, Illinois. The Rolling Meadows seal contained a Latin cross and was adopted in 1960. Zion's seal contained a Latin cross and a dove carrying a branch and was adopted in 1902. The court ordered the cities to stop using the long-standing seals, holding that the use of the religious symbols in the seals violates the Establishment Clause.

Annual Christmas Display Banned for Tell About Jesus

Doe v. Small, 934 F.2d 743 (7th Cir. 1991)

A city's annual yuletide display included sixteen large paintings showcasing events in the life of Jesus Christ. A lawsuit was filed to eradicate the religious expression from the public square and end the yuletide display. The court



struck down the long-standing tradition of including the pictures, finding that such a display endorsed religion and violated the Establishment Clause.

Italian Cultural Festival Banned from Including Italian Mass

Doe v. Village of Crestwood, 917 F.2d 1476 (7th Cir. 1990)

A long-standing tradition of the Village of Crestwood's "A Touch of Italy" festival was to include an Italian mass, but a citizen filed suit challenging the mass tradition. The Northern District of Illinois granted an injunction preventing the mass. The Seventh Circuit affirmed.

Lawsuit Leads to Banning of Hanukkah Display

Kaplan v. City of Burlington, 891 F.2d 1024 (2d Cir. 1989)

A lawsuit challenged a city's menorah display during the month of December, and the court struck down the display of the menorah on the grounds that such religious expression violated the Establishment Clause.

ACLU Attacks Nativity Scene

ACLU v. City of Birmingham, 791 F.2d 1561 (6th Cir. 1986)

The ACLU filed suit to expel a Nativity scene from the annual holiday display at city hall, claiming it violated the Establishment Clause. The Sixth Circuit held that the display violated the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Challenges Nativity Scene

Mather v. Village of Mundelein, 864 F.2d 1291 (7th Cir. 1989)

Rachel Mather challenged a holiday display in front of Village Hall in Mundelein, alleging that the display's inclusion of a Nativity scene gave her a sense of inferiority because she was Jewish. The Seventh Circuit held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Attacks School District for Allowing Religious Expression for Cultural Heritage

Florey v. Sioux Falls School District, 619 F.2d 1311 (8th Cir. 1980)

A lawsuit was brought, alleging that policy statement and rules adopted by the Sioux Falls School District regarding religious expression during holiday celebrations violated the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the school district could adopt rules permitting the observance of holidays having both a religious and a secular basis. These rules permitted religious symbols, music, art, literature, and drama to be taught as part of the instruction in the cultural and religious heritage of the holidays.

Premier Medical Group in Tennessee Refuses to Hire Sikh Neurologist

Singh v. Premier Medical Group, P.C., No. 3:16-cv-3301 (M.D. Tenn., filed Dec. 27, 2016)

Dr. Jaswinder Pal Singh is a licensed and board certified neurologist. Dr. Singh applied for a position with the Premier Medical Group in Tennessee. The recruiter praised Dr. Singh's credentials over the phone, but after seeing Dr. Singh's appearance with his religiously-mandated beard and turban, further interviews were abruptly denied. Now Dr. Singh has filed a lawsuit against Premier Medical Group accusing it of engaging in religious discrimination in refusing to hire him.

Pennsylvania Hospital Fires Employees Who Hold Religious Objections to Vaccinations

EEOC v. Saint Vincent Health Center, No. 1:16-cv-00234 (W.D. Pa., Dec. 23, 2016)

In October 2013, Saint Vincent Health Center, which operates Saint Vincent Hospital in Erie, Pennsylvania, implemented mandatory flu vaccines for its employees. Six employees requested religious accommodations as they held religious objections to vaccination. Instead of providing a religious accommodation, Saint Vincent fired the employees. The EEOC sued Saint Vincent for violating the religious rights of the employees. Saint Vincent settled the lawsuit by rehiring the six employees and agreeing to pay them \$300,000. The hospital has also agreed to revise its policy as to religious objections to the flu vaccine.

Lawsuit Demands Removal of "In God We Trust" from Currency

New Doe Child #1 v. Congress of the United States of America, No. 5:16-cv-00059 (N.D. Ohio, Nov. 30, 2016)

Several persons and their children filed a lawsuit to remove the national motto, "In God We Trust," from America's currency despite numerous courts having found that the national motto is constitutional. First Liberty Institute represented The American Legion in defending the national motto. The federal district court judge held that the national motto is permissible on currency.

Jehovah's Witness Fired for Refusing to Say, "Merry Christmas"

Appleyard v. Murphy Oil USA, Inc., No. 1:16-cv-01290 (W.D. Tenn., filed Nov. 10, 2016)

According to a federal lawsuit, Murphy Oil USA, a chain of gasoline stations, fired an employee who is a Jehovah's Witness for refusing to greet customers with, "Merry Christmas." Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate Christmas and believe that it would be a violation of their religion to wish others a merry



Christmas. Prior to the termination, a district manager at Murphy Oil USA had criticized the Jehovah's Witness employee's faith.

Michigan Company Refuses to Hire Pentecostal Woman Because of Her Religious Beliefs

EEOC v. Akebono Brake Corp., No. 3:16-cv-03545 (D.S.C., filed Nov. 3, 2016)
The Akebono Brake Corporation, a Michigan-based company that designs and manufactures brake components, refused to hire Clintoria Burnett because Burnett, as a Pentecostal, believes that she must wear skirts or dresses instead of pants. Akebono's dress code requires all employees to wear pants, and Akebono was unwilling to accommodate Burnett's religious beliefs. The EEOC sued Akebono for discriminating against Burnett's religion.

Religious Hospitals Forced to Provide Procedures that Violate their Beliefs

Franciscan Alliance, Inc. v. Burwell, No. 7:16-cv-108 (N.D. Tex., filed Aug. 23, 2016)

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of "sex." The Department of Health and Human Services, however, interpreted "sex" to include gender identity and "termination of pregnancy." Under this interpretation, the ACA would require religious hospitals and doctors to perform sex-change operations for transgendered persons if they perform the same procedures for non-transgendered persons. For example, if a hospital performs a hysterectomy for a woman with uterine cancer, it would be required to perform a hysterectomy for a woman transitioning to a man, even if the doctors do not believe it to be in the best interest of the patient and even if doing so would violate the hospital or doctor's religious beliefs. A group of religious health care systems and states filed a lawsuit to stop this interpretation of the ACA.

St. Louis Butcher Supply Company Fires Employee for Muslim Beliefs

EEOC v. KASCO, LLC, No. 4:16-cv-1333 (E.D. Mo., filed Aug. 17, 2016)

Latifa Sidiqi had worked for several years for KASCO, a St. Louis company that sells butcher supplies. When Sidiqi became more serious about practicing her Muslim faith and started wearing a hijab, her supervisor mocked Sidiqi. When Sidiqi complained about her supervisor's behavior, she was terminated. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on Sidiqi's behalf against KASCO for engaging in religious discrimination.

UPS Forces Muslim Drivers to Shave Beards and Tells One, “God Would Understand”

EEOC v. United Parcel Service, Inc., No. 1:15-cv-04141 (E.D.N.Y., filed July 15, 2015)
The EEOC filed a lawsuit against UPS for refusing to accommodate religious beliefs that conflict with UPS’s appearance policy, such as its refusal to permit Muslim drivers to maintain beards. At least one Muslim driver was told “God would understand” his shaving to follow UPS’s policy. The lawsuit is ongoing.

Orlando Staffing Company Fires Employee for Employee’s Religious Beliefs

EEOC v. Ramnarain II, LLC, No. 6:16-cv-01250 (M.D. Fla., filed July 12, 2016)
HospitalityStaff is a staffing company that provides employees for Walt Disney World hotels. Courtney Joseph, an employee of HospitalityStaff assigned to be a prep cook at Walt Disney World’s Shades of Green hotel, is a Rastafarian. As part of his Rastafarian practice, Joseph wears his hair in dreadlocks. For over a year, Joseph wore his dreadlocks tucked under his hat without incident. Following a Disney inspection for compliance with Disney’s appearance policy, however, Joseph was ordered to cut his hair. Joseph responded that he could not because of his religious beliefs. In response, HospitalityStaff fired Joseph. The EEOC filed a lawsuit against HospitalityStaff for refusing to accommodate Joseph’s religious beliefs. The lawsuit settled after HospitalityStaff agreed to stop discriminating on the basis of religion and to pay \$30,000 to Joseph.

Michigan Attempts to Dissuade Religious Objections to Vaccines

Nikolao v. Lyon, No. 4:16-cv-12545 (E.D. Mich., filed July 7, 2016)
Michigan provides an exemption to vaccination requirements for religious objections. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, however, created a “Religious Waiver Note” to provide guidance to health department employees on how to convince religious objectors that their religious beliefs are wrong. For example, the note has instructions to tell Jewish objectors that “[d]ietary kosher limitations on medications with porcine components apply to oral administration, but not to injection” and to tell Christian objectors that “[v]accines with remote fetal implications [(i.e., vaccines that are based on cell lines from aborted babies)] are morally acceptable.” Tara Nikolao, a Catholic mother of four, holds a religious objection to certain vaccines on the basis of the use of aborted cells in their manufacture. When Nikolao sought a religious exemption to the vaccination requirement, however, the employees of the Wayne County Health District asked her to “declare what religion she practices” and “explain her religious beliefs.” The employees also, relying on the note, told her that there are no religions that have objections



to vaccines. The health district employees ultimately refused to give Nikolao a religious exemption to the vaccines.

California Eliminates Religious Exemption from Mandatory Immunizations

Whitlow v. State of California, No. 3:16-cv-1715 (S.D. Cal., filed July 1, 2016)

A number of parents sued the State of California for violating their religious and parental rights after California revoked its religious exemption to the state's mandatory immunization law. After a federal district court refused to temporarily protect the parents' rights, the parents dismissed the lawsuit.

Medical Center Fires Employee for Requesting Religious Accommodation

EEOC v. Baystate Medical Center, Inc., No. 3:16-cv-30086 (D. Mass., filed June 2, 2016)

Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, requires its employees to receive the flu vaccine or wear a mask while on the job. Stephanie Clarke was a Baystate employee who had a religious objection to vaccinations. Clarke found that those she interacted with could not understand her when she was wearing the mask. When Clarke asked Baystate to work with her to find an alternative accommodation that would protect her religious beliefs while allowing her to more effectively do her job, Baystate fired her. The EEOC sued Baystate for violating Clarke's religious rights.

Mission Hospital Fires Employees for Religious Beliefs About Vaccinations

EEOC v. Mission Hospital, Inc., No. 1:16-cv-00118 (W.D.N.C., filed Apr. 28, 2016)

Mission Hospital requires its employees to receive flu vaccines annually by December. The hospital permits its employees to request religious exemptions to the vaccine requirement, but only if they request the accommodation by September 1. Several employees requested religious accommodations to the vaccine requirement after September 1. Mission Hospital denied all of these requests and then fired each employee who made a religious accommodation request. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed a lawsuit against the hospital for engaging in religious discrimination.

Atheist Organization Sues Santa Clara to Remove Cross at Historical Site

Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. v. City of Santa Clara, No. 5:16-cv-2072 (N.D. Cal., filed Apr. 20, 2016)

The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit against the City of Santa Clara to remove a cross near the location of the city's second Spanish mission, which stood from 1777 to 1784. The cross was donated to the city by the Lions Club in 1953.

State of Georgia Fires Doctor

Walsh v. Georgia Dep't of Public Health, No. 1:16-cv-01278 (N.D. Ga., filed Apr. 20, 2016)

Dr. Eric Walsh was a respected doctor in Pasadena, California, and a law pastor in his Seventh-day Adventist church. In 2014, the State of Georgia enthusiastically hired Dr. Eric Walsh as a senior official in the State's Department of Public Health. After reviewing sermons Dr. Walsh had preached at his local church in California, however, Georgia terminated him. Dr. Walsh filed a charge of discrimination with the EEOC against the state for unlawfully terminating him based solely on his religious beliefs, and First Liberty Institute is representing Dr. Walsh in a lawsuit against the Georgia Department of Public Health.

Panama City Beach Attempts to Stop Religious Tracts at Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally

McMahon v. City of Panama City Beach, Florida, No. 5:16-cv-60 (N.D. Fla., Apr. 12, 2016)

Richard McMahon is a Christian who wanted to pass out religious literature—Gospel tracts—at the Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally held at Frank Brown Park in Panama City Beach, Florida. Panama City Beach, however, warned Mr. McMahon that it had granted a permit to the rally for use of the public park and that Mr. McMahon could be arrested if he insisted on distributing the tracts. Mr. McMahon filed a lawsuit to protect his religious free speech rights, and a federal district court agreed that the city violated Mr. McMahon's rights by attempting to stop free speech at a public park, even though a permit for the use of the park had been given to the event.

ACLU Sues Catholic Hospitals for Refusing to Perform Abortions

American Civil Liberties Union v. Trinity Health Corp., No. 15-cv-12611 (E.D. Mich., Apr. 11, 2016)

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sued Trinity Health Corp., a Catholic hospital group with eighty-six hospitals in twenty-one states, because the Catholic hospitals would not violate their religious beliefs by performing abortions. A federal judge dismissed the lawsuit, holding that the ACLU had no standing to sue the Catholic hospitals.

Female Inmate Forced to Undergo Search by Male Officer in Violation of Her Religious Beliefs

Brown v. Bureau of Prisons, No. 3:14-cv-681 (D. Conn., Mar. 31, 2016)

Juleen Brown, a federal inmate, was forced to undergo searches by a male

correctional officer in violation of Brown's religious beliefs. She filed a lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons. The lawsuit was permitted to continue under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Lawsuit Challenges County Commissioners' Prayers Referencing Jesus

Hake v. Carroll County, No. 1:13-cv-01312 (D. Md. Mar. 8, 2016)

A federal district court in Maryland granted a preliminary injunction barring Carroll County Commissioners from offering "sectarian" prayers at council meetings. The Board of Commissioners previously agreed to not say the words "Jesus," "Jesus Christ," "Savior," "Prince of Peace," or "Lamb of God." The court decided that the commissioners could offer nonsectarian prayers that do not invoke a particular deity associated with a specific faith or belief. Following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, the court lifted the injunction. The case is ongoing.

Muslim Technician Denied Promotion After Celebrating Religious Holiday

Hassane v. TriMedx, Inc., No. 2:16-cv-10540 (E.D. Mich., filed Feb. 15, 2016)

Abdelrahman Hassane worked for TriMedx, where he was in a training program. Hassane worked long enough to acquire over two weeks of paid vacation. Hassane requested, and was granted, permission to use his two weeks of paid vacation to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr in accordance with Hassane's religious beliefs. Upon Hassane's return, however, he was removed from his training program, placed on probation, denied the tools necessary to complete his job, refused any promotions, and demoted to a low-level inventory job. Hassane filed a lawsuit against TriMedx asserting that he was discriminated against because of his religious beliefs. The lawsuit is ongoing.

Employee Fired After Posting Comment About Religious Beliefs

Banks v. Rapid Glob. Bus. Sols., Inc., No. 2:15-cv-12455-GAD-EAS (E.D. Mich., Feb. 4, 2016)

After Ford Motor Company posted an article on its intranet about making the company more pro-LGBT, Thomas Banks posted a comment to the article respectfully disagreeing with the company's stance. He commented that he believed that an automotive manufacturer should not be endorsing or promoting immoral sexual conduct. He also voiced his concerns about the policy's effect on Christians in the workplace. In response to the comment, Banks was immediately terminated. He filed a lawsuit against Ford and Rapid Global Business Solutions to protect his civil rights. The case settled.

Jewish Inmate Denied Kosher Meals

Moussazadeh v. Texas Department of Criminal Justice, No. 3:7-cv-574 (S.D. Tex. Jan. 8, 2016)

Max Moussazadeh, an observant Jew incarcerated in the Texas prison system, brought suit against the state for its failure to accommodate his religious beliefs by providing kosher meals. Mr. Moussazadeh argued that the state unlawfully restricted his right to religious exercise under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). Since Mr. Moussazadeh filed his lawsuit, he has been relocated to a facility that serves kosher meals. The case settled.

Pastor and National Park Service Employee Fired After Lunch-Break Baptism

Holly v. Jewell, No. 4:16-cv-00011-DMR (N.D. Cal., filed Jan. 4, 2016)

Pastor Roger Holly is a Baptist minister and was an employee of the National Park Service at the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park. During one of Pastor Holly's lunch breaks, he removed his uniform and performed a baptism at the seashore next to the park. The next day, Pastor Holly's supervisor questioned him about the baptism. Over a month later, the National Park Service fired Pastor Holly for performing the baptism. Pastor Holly filed a lawsuit against the National Park Service to protect his religious liberty rights. The lawsuit is ongoing.

American Humanist Association Sues Baxter County, Arkansas, Over Nativity Scene

American Humanist Association v. Baxter County, Arkansas, No. 3:14-cv-03126-TLB (W.D. Ark., Nov. 12, 2015)

Baxter County, Arkansas, has, for at least fifteen years, displayed a Nativity scene along with a series of secular Christmas displays such as a Santa Claus, reindeer, and a Christmas tree. The American Humanist Association filed a lawsuit to ban Baxter County from displaying the Nativity scene. The district court held that the Christmas display violated the Establishment Clause.

ACLU Sues County over Courthouse Nativity Scene

Freedom From Religion Found. v. Franklin Cty., No. 1:14-cv-02047-TWP-DML (S.D. Ind. Sept. 23, 2015)

The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana filed a lawsuit against Franklin County for allowing a Christian Nativity scene on its courthouse lawn. The lawsuit was dismissed as moot because the county passed an ordinance



allowing residents to erect their own displays outside the courthouse, regardless of the displays' point of view.

Health Care Center Retaliates Against Nurse Who Asked for Religious Accommodation

EEOC v. N. Mem'l Health Care, No. 0:15-cv-03675 (D. Minn., filed Sept. 16, 2015)
North Memorial Health Care, based in Robbinsdale, Minnesota, withdrew a job offer to Emily Sure-Ondara after she requested an accommodation to allow her time for her religious practices. Although she told the hospital that she was willing to work without the accommodation if necessary, the center withdrew her job offer entirely. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission commented that federal law protects the right of job applicants to request a religious accommodation without fear that it will lead to retaliation.

Mining Company Forces Christian to Retire over Hand Scanner

U.S. EEOC v. CONSOL Energy, Inc., No. 1:13-cv-215 (D.W.V. Aug. 25, 2015)
A Christian coal miner refused to use the mining company's new biometric hand scanner for clocking in and out of work because he associated the technology with the "Mark of the Beast" of prophecy. The miner requested to use other clocking systems that the company had available, but he was instead threatened with discipline. Rather than accept the discipline, the miner retired. The EEOC filed a lawsuit against the mining company on the miner's behalf, and the district court awarded over \$500,000 in damages and back pay. The case is now on appeal to the Fourth Circuit.

Muslim Inmate Sues Prison for Banning Him from Prayer Services

Dixie v. Virga, No. 2:12-cv-2626, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 5892 (E.D. Cal. Aug. 4, 2015)

Because prison officials believed that an altercation had taken place at a prayer service, James Dixie, a practicing Muslim, was not allowed to continue attending Jum'u'ah prayer services with the general population of the prison. Dixie filed a lawsuit against the prison, arguing that keeping him from Jum'u'ah prayer services substantially burdens his religious beliefs. The case settled.

County Clerk Sued to Compel Her to Violate Conscience

Cato v. Lang, No. 4:15-cv-00491-A (N.D. Tex., filed July 6, 2015)

Katie Lang, a county clerk in Hood County, Texas, was sued for not issuing a marriage license to same-sex couple James Cato and Jody Stapleton. Lang clarified that although she was unable to issue the license due to her faith-based beliefs, other employees in her office would issue marriage certificates.

Although the plaintiffs received a marriage license from one of the other employees, they did not drop their lawsuit against Lang.

Police Force Muslim Woman to Remove Religious Headscarf

Aldhalimi v. City of Dearborn, No. 2:15-cv-12337-DPH-MJH (E.D. Mich., filed June 30, 2015)

Maha Aldhalimi, a devout Muslim, was arrested by a police officer for an unpaid parking ticket. When she was taken to the police headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan, she was forced to remove her headscarf for a booking photo even though she informed them that doing so in front of male, non-family members would be a serious violation of her sincerely held religious beliefs. Aldhalimi filed suit against the city for failing to provide any religious accommodations. Following the lawsuit, the police department changed its policy concerning religious head coverings.

Florida Department of Corrections Denies Kosher Diet to Jewish Inmates

United States v. Florida Department of Corrections, No. 2012-cv-22958 (S.D. Fla., Apr. 30, 2015)

For years, the Florida Department of Corrections refused to provide kosher meals to Jewish inmates. The United States Department of Justice was forced to file a lawsuit against the Florida Department of Corrections under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act to force the department of corrections to provide the kosher meals. A federal district court held that denying the kosher meals violated Jewish inmates' religious rights.

Muslim Inmate Denied Halal or Kosher Meals

Strickland v. Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice, No. 3:10-CV-411 (S.D. Tex. Mar. 17, 2015)

A Muslim inmate brought a discrimination lawsuit against prison officials when they denied his request for halal meals or the kosher diet that was provided to Jewish inmates. This case was dismissed.

Pharmacist Fired After Refusing to Sell Abortifacient Contraceptives

Hall v. Walgreen Company, No. 2:14-cv-00015 (M.D. Tenn. Feb. 19 2015)

For six years, Walgreens accommodated Pharmacist Dr. Philip Hall's deeply held religious beliefs, including his strong objection to the dispensation of abortion-inducing drugs. When customers asked for these drugs, he either referred them to another pharmacist there or another nearby pharmacy. However, in August 2013, Walgreens attempted to coerce Hall to violate his religious beliefs. After he was fired, Hall filed a lawsuit in federal court to protect his religious freedom. The case settled.

Firefighter Fired for Writing Book Advocating for Biblical Marriage

Cochran v. City of Atlanta, No. 1:15-cv-00477-LMM (N.D. Ga., filed Feb. 18, 2015)
Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran, a firefighter since 1981, was fired for publishing a men's devotional book for a Baptist church group. Through his book, he wanted to help Christian men who struggle with issues of sexuality. Cochran affirmed that love is the foundation of his Christian faith, and he is willing to die for anyone as a part of his job. Although an investigation concluded that he has never discriminated against anyone, Cochran was suspended and ordered to attend sensitivity training before being terminated.

Doctor Wins Settlement Allowing Her to Choose Not to Participate in Abortions

Fernandes v. City of Philadelphia, No. 2:14-cv-05704 (E.D. Pa., filed Oct. 7, 2014)
Dr. Doris Fernandes, a Catholic physician working in Philadelphia's District Health Center, was fired for refusing to prescribe contraceptives or abortion-causing drugs. Patients seeking these drugs would be transferred to another physician at the clinic. In 2013, Dr. Fernandes was terminated after refusing to obey an order to begin prescribing contraceptives. Following a lawsuit, Dr. Fernandes received a settlement in which the city agreed to respect the deeply held religious beliefs of medical providers.

Dunkin' Donuts Settles Lawsuit After Discriminating Against Seventh-day Adventist

EEOC v. Citi Brands, LLC d/b/a Dunkin' Donuts Bakery, No. 1:14-CV-00236-MOC-DLH (W.D.N.C., filed Sept. 11, 2014)
After telling Darrell Littrell that he could begin work at a Dunkin' Donuts plant the next day, Littrell replied that working on that day would conflict with his beliefs about the Sabbath as a Seventh-day Adventist. The manager immediately rescinded the employment offer. After Littrell filed suit for religious employment discrimination, the company offered to pay him \$22,000 to settle the lawsuit out of court. The settlement also includes injunctive relief prohibiting the company from discriminating on the basis of religion in the future.

Austin Ordinance Requires Pregnancy Resource Centers to Post False and Misleading Information

Austin Lifecare v. City of Austin, No. 1:11-cv-00875-LY (W.D. Tex. June 23, 2014)
The City of Austin, Texas, passed an ordinance compelling Pregnancy Resource Centers to post a misleading sign on their doors stating whether they have a full-time medical director on-site, even if the center is not opened

full-time, and whether they are licensed by the state, even though there is no license available for Pregnancy Resource Centers. A federal district judge held that the ordinance violated the constitution, and Austin was forced to pay almost \$500,000 in attorneys fees.

Messianic Jewish Inmates Denied Worship Time or Kosher Diet

Allred v. Keller, No. 5:11-CT-3009 (E.D.N.C. June 19, 2014)

Jail authorities refused to allow two Messianic Jewish inmates to worship on their Sabbath and other holy days and refused to provide them kosher meals. The case was voluntarily dismissed.

Pharmacy Employee Derided by Supervisor Because of Religious Beliefs

Busgith v. CVS Albany, L.L.C., No. 1:14-cv-02614 (S.D.N.Y. June 16, 2014)

<http://nypost.com/2014/04/14/bronx-man-says-muslim-cvs-boss-disliked-his-white-boy-religion/>

Nowran Busgith, a practicing Seventh-day Adventist and employee at a CVS Pharmacy in New York, obtained permission to abstain from working on his Sabbath, which is from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. However, when Abdul Salui, Busgith's supervisor, found out that Busgith's time off was tied to his religious beliefs, Salui ridiculed Busgith for adhering to a "white boy religion" and denied all of Busgith's subsequent requests. Busgith filed a lawsuit for Salui's discrimination. The case settled.

Prison Allows Religious Meetings Except for Jewish Inmate

George v. County of Westchester, NY, No. 13-cv-4511, (S.D.N.Y. May 23, 2014)

Prison authorities denied access to congregational religious services and kosher meals to a Jewish inmate even though other religions were allowed to meet regularly. After finding that the prison had offered no legitimate penological reason for refusing the kosher meals and recognizing that inmates usually have a constitutional right to assemble for worship, the case settled.

Kentucky Prison Forces Jewish Inmates to Shave Heads in Violation of Religious Beliefs

Price v. White, No. 5:13-CV-00076, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 70133 (W.D. Ky. May 22, 2014)

A Jewish inmate of the Kentucky State Penitentiary was forced to shave his head on a weekly basis, in violation of his religious beliefs. The case was dismissed because the inmate was transferred to a different facility.



Hebrew-Israelite Inmate Denied Kosher Diet

Thompson-Jones v. Gossage, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 100513 (E.D. Wis. May 21, 2014)

Authorities at the Brown County Jail refused to accommodate a Hebrew-Israelite jail inmate with a kosher diet unless the inmate adequately proved his practice of the faith. The case was dismissed.

Humanist Group Sues to Stop Prayers at County Commissioners' Meetings

Hake v. Carroll County, Md., No. 13-1312, 2014 WL 2047448 (D. Md. May 15, 2014)

<http://christiannews.net/2014/04/12/maryland-county-commissioners-agree-to-obey-court-order-to-halt-prayers-in-jesus-name/>

The American Humanist Association (AHA) brought a lawsuit against the Carrollton County Commissioners in Maryland in an attempt to quell the commissioners' prayers prior to meetings. A federal district court ordered an injunction barring them from using specific language, but the commissioners chose to follow their religious beliefs rather than follow the decree. The AHA consequently filed a motion for contempt of court, but the injunction and the motion were dismissed upon the Supreme Court's decision in *Town of Greece, New York v. Galloway*.

Muslim Inmate's Religious Books Confiscated

Payne v. Duncan, No. 3:13-CV-2203, 2014 WL 1653136 (M.D. Pa. Apr. 24, 2014)

Joshua Payne, an inmate at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PDC), had several books that he used to help him study Islam. When PDC authorities confiscated and discarded his books after a cell search, Payne brought a lawsuit. A Pennsylvania district court dismissed Payne's claim because he failed to allege "that he was actually prevented from exercising any religious right."

Prison Limits Inmate Access to Religious Books

Ind v. Colorado Dep't of Corr., No. 09-CV-0537, 2014 WL 1312457 (D. Colo. Mar. 31, 2014)

Jacob Ind, an inmate at the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC), used numerous books to study the Bible and his religious faith after his conversion to Christian Separatism while in prison. However, prison authorities passed a rule that inmates could only have two books during administrative segregation. Ind sued for the burden that CDOC put on the free exercise of his religious practices, and a Colorado federal district court found in Ind's favor.



Muslim Bus Driver Fired for Refusing to Attach Logos to Religious Headscarf

Lewis v. New York City Transit Auth., No. 04-CV-2331, 2014 WL 1343248 (E.D.N.Y. Mar. 31, 2014)

Stephanie Lewis, a practicing Muslim, was employed by the City of New York as a bus driver. However, she was transferred to a bus depot and ultimately terminated after she refused to attach company logos to her khimar (a long headscarf required by her religion). Lewis then brought a lawsuit against the city for their failure to adequately accommodate her religion. The court held that the Transit Authority violated Lewis's constitutional rights.

Muslim County Employee Subjected to Years of Harassment Before Being Fired

Aboubaker v. Washtenaw, No. 2:11-cv-13001 (E.D. Mich. Feb. 27, 2014)

Ali Aboubaker, a Muslim, worked as a maintenance engineer for Washtenaw County, Michigan, for seventeen years before being fired because of his race and religion. During those seventeen years, Aboubaker was harassed by his employer because of his beard, which is required by his religious beliefs, and his head covering and called a "terrorist." A jury awarded Aboubaker \$1.2 million because of the discrimination that he endured. The county is appealing.

NYPD Sued for Maintaining Surveillance on Persons Because of Their Religion

Hassan v. City of New York, No. 2:12-cv-03401 (D.N.J. Feb. 20, 2014)

A group of New Jersey Muslims filed a lawsuit against the New York Police Department (NYPD) for being subject to surveillance based solely on their religion. The NYPD used video surveillance, photographs, and a human mapping system to track the daily lives of Muslim residents. The NYPD continued to track every aspect of the plaintiffs' lives even after they found no leads to terrorism. A federal district court dismissed the lawsuit.

Messianic Jewish Inmate Denied Kosher Meals

White v. Linderman, No. 3:11-cv-08152 (D. Ariz. Jan. 15, 2014)

Prison authorities refused to accommodate a Messianic Jewish inmate with a kosher diet unless the inmate adequately proved the religious requirements of the faith with outside documentation. This case settled.

Muslim Inmate Subjected to Public Strip Searches in Violation of His Religious Beliefs

Strickland v. Van Lanen, No. 13-cv-1127, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 873 (E.D. Wis. Jan. 3, 2014)

Melvin Strickland, a Wisconsin state prisoner, alleges that the practice of



strip searches in locations without privacy violated his sincerely held religious beliefs as a Muslim. When he requested appropriate accommodation, asking only to be searched in privacy, prison officials told him to “man up.” A Wisconsin federal district court has approved the proceeding of his complaint, and a case is pending.

Muslim Inmates Prohibited from Growing Even Short Beards to Satisfy Their Religious Beliefs

Strong v. Livingston, No. 2:12-CV-106, 2013 WL 6817095 (S.D. Tex. Dec. 20, 2013)
Hickman-Bey v. Livingston, No. 2:13-CV-266, 2013 WL 6890767 (S.D. Tex. Dec. 31, 2013)

Prison authorities refused to allow Muslim inmates to grow one-quarter inch beards in order to conform to their religious mandates. The inmates brought lawsuits for the prison’s failure to accommodate their religious needs, and a federal court issued a preliminary injunction allowing the inmates’ beards.

Muslim Inmate’s Library Time Conflicts with Religious Observance

Simmons v. Adamy, No. 08-CV-6147, 2013 WL 6622907 (W.D.N.Y. Dec. 17, 2013)

Alphonso Simmons, a Muslim prison inmate, requested certain times to access the jail library. When the prison authorities scheduled his access times to conflict with his observance of Ramadan, Simmons brought a claim for burdening his practice of his religion. A New York federal district court ruled in favor of the prison.

Federal Government Sues Florida for Florida’s Refusal to Grant Kosher Diet for Inmates

United States v. Sec’y, Florida Dept. of Corr., No. 12-22958, 2013 WL 6697786 (S.D. Fla. Dec. 6, 2013)

The U.S. Department of Justice brought a lawsuit against the State of Florida for its blanket denial of kosher foods to prisoners. A federal district court granted a preliminary injunction that ordered the Florida Department of Corrections to provide a kosher diet for all prisoners with sincerely held religious beliefs that require such a diet.

Lawsuit Challenges Strip Searches of Muslim Inmates Attending Religious Meetings

Warrior v. Gonzalez, No. 08-00677, 2013 WL 6174788 (E.D. Cal. Nov. 20, 2013)

An inmate brought a claim against prison authorities for their policy of strip-searching Muslim inmates attending religious meetings during Ramadan. The strip searches included invasive body cavity examinations and were not imposed on any other religious groups. This case is ongoing.

Jewish Police Officer Fired for Violating No-Beards Policy

Litzman v. New York City Police Dept., No. 12-4681, 2013 WL 6049066 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 15, 2013)

Fishel Litzman, a member of the Chabad Lubavitch Orthodox Jewish movement, was hired as a probationary police officer by the NYPD. Although the Department had an existing religious exemption to its general no-beard policy that beards not exceed one millimeter in length, Litzman filed a request for a further exemption due to his religious requirement of a longer beard. Litzman's request was denied, but he nonetheless continued to wear his beard. As a result, the NYPD fired him. Litzman fought back, and a New York federal district court held that the NYPD violated Litzman's First Amendment free exercise rights and ordered his reinstatement.

State Law Bars Children from Seeking Professional Help in Overcoming Unwanted Same-Sex Attraction

King v. Christie, 86 Fed. R. Serv. 3d 1581 (D.N.J. Nov. 8, 2013)

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie signed legislation barring licensed therapists in New Jersey from assisting children in overcoming unwanted same-sex attractions. A lawsuit was filed on behalf of several licensed counselors who provide the now illegal counseling and their clients arguing that the ban violates the religious liberty rights of both the counselors and the clients. A federal district court dismissed the lawsuit.

Christian Employee of the City of Portland Subjected to Extreme Hostility and Harassment

Griffin v. City of Portland, No. 3:12-CV-01591, 2013 WL 5785173 (D. Or. Oct. 25, 2013)

Theresa Lereau, an employee of the City of Portland, severely harassed her coworker, KellyMarie Griffin, about her Christian beliefs with condemnations such as, "I'm sick of your Christian attitude, your Christian [expletive] all over your desk, and your Christian [expletive] all over the place." Griffin brought a lawsuit to stop the persecution, and a federal district court awarded damages and attorneys fees to Griffin due to the extreme hostility towards her religion in her work environment.

Lawsuit Dismissed Challenging Obamacare as Interfering with Parental Rights

Wieland v. U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, No. 4:13-CV-1577, 2013 WL 5651391 (E.D. Mo. Oct. 16, 2013)

A federal district court in Missouri held that a state employee and his wife

lacked standing to bring a lawsuit alleging that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) unconstitutionally violates their religious beliefs as well as interferes with their parental rights and family integrity due to the fact that it would provide abortifacients to their daughters.

Muslim Employees of JBS Stopped from Using Informal Breaks for Prayer
E.E.O.C. v. JBS USA, LLC, No. 8:10-CV-318, 2013 WL 6621026 (D. Neb. Oct. 11, 2013)

JBS, a meat processing plant with a location in Grand Island, Nebraska, refused to allow its Muslim employees to use their informal breaks for prayer. Instead, JBS insisted that the employees wait until regularly scheduled break times (such as lunch) to conduct their mandatory prayers. The EEOC brought a lawsuit against JBS for its failure to make a religious accommodation for the Muslim employees, but a Nebraska federal district court ruled in favor of the plant.

Prison Denies Muslim Inmate Religious Diet or Shaving Waiver

Nance v. Miser, No. 12-CV-0734, 2013 WL 5530821 (D. Ariz. Oct. 7, 2013)

Prison authorities denied a Muslim inmate's request for a halal diet and a shaving waiver pursuant to the requirements of his religion, even though such requests were granted to adherents of other faiths.

Inmate and Leader of Protestant Prison Group Attacked for Complaint Against Guards

Uduko v. Cozzens, No. 11-13765, 2013 WL 5435207 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 27, 2013)

Okechukwu Uduko, a prisoner in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the leader of a prison Protestant faith group, was removed from his leadership position and subjected to false accusations in retaliation for lodging a complaint against prison guards. This case is pending.

Prison Refuses to Provide Jewish Inmate's Saturday Meal on Friday to Keep the Sabbath

Johns v. Lemmon, No. 3:12-CV-232JVB, 2013 WL 5436935 (N.D. Ind. Sept. 27, 2013)

Charles Johns, an observant Jew incarcerated under the Indiana Department of Corrections, requested that his Saturday meals be delivered on Friday so that he could correctly adhere to the mandates of his Sabbath, which is from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. However, the prison authorities refused to accommodate his request, even though other prisoners were allowed to keep precooked food in their cells for consumption at a later time. Johns filed a lawsuit to enjoin the discriminatory treatment, and

an Indiana federal district court ordered the prison to accommodate Johns's religious request.

Non-Muslim Inmates Permitted Worship Time While Muslim Inmate Was Refused

Allen v. Mikarimi, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 126996 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 5, 2013)

A Muslim inmate of San Francisco County Jail was not permitted to have group worship even though non-Muslim inmates were allowed to do so. This case was dismissed.

Muslim Employee Fired for Refusing to Remove Headscarf

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Comm'n v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc., No. 11-CV-03162, 2013 WL 4726137 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 3, 2013)

Umme Hani-Kahn, a practicing Muslim, was hired by Abercrombie & Fitch to work as a stockroom employee in San Mateo, California. Although Kahn wore a religious headscarf called a hijab that is not sold by Abercrombie as part of her religious practice, local supervisors agreed to make an exception to its "look policy" by allowing her to continue to wear a hijab so long as it matched company colors. However, several months after she was hired, a district manager informed Kahn that the mere wearing of her hijab was contrary to the "look policy." When Kahn refused to remove her hijab, she was fired. Consequently, Kahn filed a lawsuit, and a California federal district court ruled in Kahn's favor. Abercrombie agreed to revise its "look policy" and pay Kahn \$48,000 in damages.

Prison Cancels Muslim Inmate's Religious Diet During Ramadan

Grigsby v. Gaetz, No. 13-579, 2013 WL 4516408 (S.D. Ill. Aug. 26, 2013)

A Muslim inmate's Ramadan diet was cancelled twenty-two days into Ramadan, and prison guards refused to reinstate the inmate's name onto the list of prisoners eligible for the special diet. This case is pending.

Dollar General Fires Seventh-day Adventist Employee for Keeping Sabbath

Webster v. Dolgencorp, LLC, No. 13-0690, 2013 WL 4501461 (D.N.J. Aug. 22, 2013)

Dollar General in Sicklerville, New Jersey, hired Matthew Webster, a practicing Seventh-day Adventist, and agreed to give Webster a religious accommodation that exempted him from working on his Sabbath, which is from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. Dollar General began to schedule Webster for Saturdays, however, and terminated Webster after he continued to exercise his religious faith by honoring his Sabbath. This case is pending.

ACLU Stops Indiana Art Project Featuring Crosses Decorated by Children

Cabral v. City of Evansville, 958 F. Supp. 2d 1018 (S.D. Ind. July 31, 2013)

The ACLU of Indiana sued the city of Evansville, Indiana, for approving the display of up to thirty-one crosses along a section of the city's riverfront. The city regularly allowed the display of other artwork and sculptures. The exhibition, entitled "Cross the River," would have been decorated by children attending local Vacation Bible School summer camps. A federal district judge held that such a display violated the Establishment Clause.

Inmates Sue Jail for Confiscating Religious Books

Handzlik v. Lain, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 96767 (N.D. Ind. July 11, 2013) and *Bray v. Lain*, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 97269 (N.D. Ind. July 12, 2013)

Inmates at Porter County Jail were allowed to file lawsuits against jail staff alleging, among other complaints, that the staff, without reason, intercepted and confiscated books sent to inmates that were needed to practice their religion. One of these cases was dismissed, but one is still pending..

Catholic Inmate Threatened for Writing to Catholic Bishop

Quintero v. Palmer, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 92831 (D. Nev. July 1, 2013)

Jail authorities prohibited a Catholic inmate from conducting group rosary services. The inmate was also threatened with disciplinary action if he continued to write to the local catholic bishop, and the jail mail room rejected his subscription to Catholic reading materials. The case was dismissed.

New Jersey Car Dealership Refuses to Hire Sikh Unless He Shaves His Beard

E.E.O.C. v. United Galaxy, Inc., No. 10-4987, 2013 WL 3223626 (D.N.J. June 25, 2013)

Gurpreet Kherna, a practicing Sikh, applied for a position as a sales associate with United Galaxy, Inc., a car dealership in Little Falls, New Jersey. Although Kherna was qualified for the position, the dealership informed him that the job was contingent on the shaving of his beard—an action prohibited by his religion. Kherna chose to honor his faith, and the dealership refused to hire him. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on Kherna's behalf, and the court issued a consent decree giving Kherna \$50,000 in addition to other significant relief.

Chevrolet Dealership Challenges Obamacare's Abortifacient Coverage Mandate

Holland v. U.S. Dep't. of Health and Human Svcs., No. 2:13-15487 (S.D.W.V. filed Jun. 24, 2013)

Joe Holland Chevrolet is a family-owned Chevrolet dealership whose stated

purpose is “to glorify and honor God by being faithful stewards for all that is entrusted to us.” Because of the Holland family’s strong religious beliefs regarding abortion, Joe Holland Chevrolet does not want to fund abortifacient drugs like Plan B (the “day-after pill”) and Ella (the “week-after pill”) as required by Obamacare’s HHS Mandate. Liberty Institute worked with Joe Holland Chevrolet to fight the government’s requirements that the Holland family’s company fund these abortion-inducing drugs.

Abercrombie & Fitch Discriminates in Hiring of Muslim Employees

E.E.O.C. v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc., 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 51905 (N.D. Cal. Apr. 9, 2013).

The EEOC sued Abercrombie & Fitch for refusing to hire a stockroom employee applicant because of her religious conviction to wear an Islamic head scarf. Although she received a passing score in the interview, she was not hired because Abercrombie determined her head scarf would be inconsistent with its “look policy”—despite the fact that it has made over seventy exceptions to its “look policy” since 2006, including headwear exceptions. The court found in favor of the applicant and awarded her \$23,000 in damages.

Muslim Employee of New York City Transit Authority Alleges Discriminatory Treatment

Ahmed v. New York City Transit Authority, No. 1:13-cv-1777 (E.D.N.Y. filed Apr. 3, 2013)

A Muslim employee filed a federal lawsuit against the New York City Transit Authority (NYTA), where he worked as a bus cleaner. The man alleges the NYTA unreasonably refused to accommodate his religious observance of Friday Jumu’ah services and acquiesced to anti-Muslim harassment.

Religious Liberties Group Sues for Right to Meet in Plainfield Village Hall

Liberty Counsel, Inc. v. Village of Plainfield, Illinois, No. 1:12-9485 (N.D. Ill., filed Nov. 28, 2012)

The Plainfield Village Hall is a public forum for community meetings in Plainfield, Illinois, that is open to educational, cultural, and civic groups so long as the meeting has no religious content. Liberty Counsel wanted to reserve a community room to teach about American history from a Christian perspective. The administrator of the Plainfield Village Hall told Liberty Counsel that their request would be rejected because it was “from a Christian perspective.” Liberty Counsel filed a lawsuit against the village challenging the village’s discrimination against religious use. Plainfield settled with Liberty Counsel and changing its policies to clarify that the “Village does not prohibit an ap-



plicant from presenting civic, cultural, educational or informational programs from a religious viewpoint.”

Member of East African Hebrew Religion Sues for Right to Wear Religious Headdress

Daniels v. City of N. Charleston, No. 2:12-319, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 126767 (D.S.C. Aug. 9, 2012)

A municipal court in North Charleston, South Carolina, refused to allow Daniels, a member of the East African Hebrew religion, to wear a religious headdress into its courtroom. Daniels sued the city for violating his rights under the U.S. Constitution and South Carolina’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

FFRF Sues City for Refusal to Place Atheist Sign Next to Nativity Scene

Freedom From Religion Found., Inc. v. City of Warren, Mich., WL 1964113 (E.D. Mich. May 31, 2012)

The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed suit claiming the city of Warren, Michigan, denied a resident’s free speech rights when it refused his request to place a sandwich board sign containing atheistic statements like, “There are no gods, no devils, no angels ... Religion is but myth and superstition” next to a Nativity scene. The court upheld the city’s decision to not allow the atheist to display his sign.

Atheist Group Attacks Florida Ten Commandments Monument

American Atheists, Inc. v. Bradford County, Florida, No. 3:2012-cv-00618 (M.D. Fla., filed May 25, 2012)

American Atheists, Inc. claimed Bradford County, Florida, violated the Establishment Clause by placing a five-foot-tall stone Ten Commandments monument in the courtyard of the courthouse. Following a mediation, the monument was allowed to remain, but the atheist group was permitted to place a monument to atheism several feet away from the Ten Commandments.

Lawsuit Attacks Use of the Lord’s Prayer Before Sussex County Council Meetings

Mullin v. Sussex County, 2012 WL 1753662 (D. Del. May 15, 2012)

The Delaware Federal District Court granted a preliminary injunction against the Sussex County Council from opening their meetings with the Lord’s Prayer on the grounds that the practice violated the Establishment Clause. However, the court stayed the effectiveness of the injunction for thirty days to allow the parties to come up with a compromise that would allow the meeting to

be opened with a prayer in a manner that did not violate the state or U.S. constitutions. The council voted to have a rotation of different prayers read before the meetings to comply with the Establishment Clause.

Pastors Required to Sign Away Constitutional Rights for Permit to Preach
Stand Up America Now v. City of Dearborn, 2012 WL 1145075 (E.D. Mich. April 5, 2012)

Pastors that work with Stand Up America Now applied for a permit to preach to Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan, but were told they must sign away their constitutional rights in order to get the permit. The court sided with the pastors and declared Dearborn's demands unconstitutional.

ACLU Attacks Privately Donated Ten Commandments Monument in New Mexico

Felix v. City of Bloomfield, New Mexico, No. 1:12-cv-00125 (D.N.M., filed Feb. 8, 2012)

In July of 2011, the City of Bloomfield, New Mexico, erected a privately donated Ten Commandments monument in front of their city hall. Less than a year later, the ACLU filed suit in the U.S. District Court of New Mexico to remove the monument.

Lawsuit Stops Virginia County Meetings from Opening with Prayer

Doe v. Pittsylvania County, Virginia, No. 4:11-43, 2012 WL 363978 (W.D. Va. Feb. 3, 2012)

A federal district court in Virginia held that the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause by opening its meetings with Christian prayer.

Christian College Forced to Sue to Avoid Being Forced to Cover Abortifacient Drugs

The Criswell College v. Sebelius, No. 3:12-4409 (N.D. Tex., filed Nov. 1, 2012)

The Criswell College is a nonprofit, Christian college that was going to be forced under Obamacare to indirectly provide for abortifacient drugs such as Plan B (the "day-after pill") and Ella (the "week-after pill"). Liberty Institute worked with The Criswell College to fight the government's requirements that The Criswell College provide these drugs against its religious convictions.

Preacher Forced to Sue to Preach at a Public Festival

Jankowski v. City of Duluth, 2011 WL 7656906 (D. Minn. Dec. 20, 2011)

A federal district court granted a preliminary injunction allowing a preacher to speak at the Bentleyville Tour of Lights festival in Duluth, Minnesota.



The preacher sued the City of Duluth for stopping him from preaching at the public festival, claiming that the city's actions were in violation of the First Amendment.

Sixty-Three-Year-Old Nativity Scene Shut Down When Road Commission Refuses Permit

Satawa v. Board of County Road Commissioners of Macomb County, 788 F. Supp. 2d 579 (E.D. Mich. 2011)

A Michigan family erected a Nativity scene display for over 63 years at the median of a county road servicing over 82,000 cars per day. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a complaint to the Road Commission in 2008 on behalf of an anonymous resident to have the display removed. Despite the structure's nine-and-a-half-foot height, bright lights at night, and other structures erected at the site by private organizations, the Road Commission claimed that it was unaware of the display until the complaint. The display was immediately removed for not having a permit, and subsequent applications for a permit were denied. The owners of the display offered to pay for insurance, display a sign clearly stating that it is a private display, and move the display twenty-five feet from the curb. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan held that the denial of the permit was justified by a compelling state interest in traffic safety.

ACLU Sues to Keep Ten Commandments Display Out of School

Doe v. School Board of Giles County, No. 11-435 (W.D. Va. Sept. 13, 2011)

The ACLU of Virginia, working with the Freedom From Religion Foundation, sued a school board because a school had a display of the Ten Commandments. The school board removed the display and replaced it with a page from a textbook that describes the Ten Commandments as the roots of democracy but does not list each commandment.

ACLU Attacks Ten Commandments Display in Dixie County, Florida

ACLU of Florida, Inc. v. Dixie County, 797 F. Supp. 2d 1280 (N.D. Fla. July 15, 2011)

Dixie County permitted a local company to erect a Ten Commandments monument near the county courthouse. The ACLU filed a lawsuit, seeking removal of the monument, damages, and attorney's fees. A federal district court ordered the city to remove the monument.

Police Arrest Proselytizers at a Catholic Festival

Teesdale v. City of Chicago, 792 F. Supp. 2d 978 (N.D. Ill. May 26, 2011)

Police arrested proselytizers at a Catholic festival for disturbing the peace. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois held in favor of the

proselytizers, allowing them to enter the public streets where the festival was being held, speak to people at the festival, hand out pamphlets, and carry signs within a certain size.

Transportation Authority Prohibits Ad Targeting Persons Leaving Islam

American Freedom Defense Initiative v. Suburban Mobility Authority, No. 10-12134, 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 35083 (E.D. Mich. Mar. 31, 2011)

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) prohibited the American Freedom Defense Initiative from running advertisements on SMART buses that stated, “Fatwa on your head? Is your family or community threatening you? Leaving Islam? Got questions? Get Answers!” A federal judge ruled that SMART violated the American Freedom Defense Initiative’s First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

Bus Driver Fired for Refusing to Drive Woman to Planned Parenthood

Graning v. Capital Area Rural Transportation System, No. 1:10-523 (W.D. Tex. 2010)

Pastor and bus driver Edwin Graning was fired for refusing to drive a woman to Planned Parenthood. According to federal law, employers must accommodate their employees’ religious beliefs. Graning and the Capital Area Rural Transportation System settled, with Graning receiving \$21,000.

Professor Denied Position Because He is a Christian

Gaskell v. University of Kentucky, No. 09-244 (E.D. Ky. 2010)

Professor Martin Gaskell applied for the position of Observatory Director at the University of Kentucky, but he was turned down after the hiring committee found out that he was a Christian. Professor Gaskell filed a lawsuit under Title VII alleging religious discrimination. The court found that there was clear evidence of religious discrimination. Gaskell agreed to a settlement of \$125,000.

Two Employees Fired for Privately Praying After Work

Shatkin v. University of Texas at Arlington, 109 Fair Empl. Prac. Cas. (BNA) 1559 (N.D. Tex. July 9, 2010)

The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) fired two women for privately praying for an absent coworker after work. The women sued UTA for violating their religious liberty. The case settled.



FFRF Sues Wisconsin County to Remove Nativity Scene from Courthouse

Freedom from Religion Foundation v. Manitowoc County, 708 F.Supp.2d 773 (E.D. Wis. April 22, 2010)

Freedom From Religion Foundation sued Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, in an attempt to remove a Nativity scene from the front of the courthouse. The county changed the policy about decorations to one in which anyone can put up decorations outside the courthouse. A federal district court found that under the new policy, the Nativity scene did not reflect a governmental endorsement of Christianity.

FFRF Sues to Stop Architect from Adding Pledge of Allegiance and National Motto to Capitol

Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. v. Ayers, 748 F.Supp.2d 982 (W.D. Wis. 2010)

The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed suit against Ayers, an architect hired by the Wisconsin capital to put the Pledge of Allegiance and the national motto, "In God We Trust," on the capitol building. The suit alleged that the Pledge and the motto violate the Establishment Clause. The district court found that there was no violation of the Establishment Clause and that the Freedom From Religion Foundation did not have taxpayer standing to bring the suit.

Lawsuit Seeks to Stop Voluntary Recitation of Pledge of Allegiance

Freedom From Religion Foundation v. Hanover School District, 665 F.Supp.2d 58 (D.N.H. Sept. 30, 2009)

Jan and Pat Doe, parents of three children in the Hanover and Dresden school districts, filed a suit to combat the New Hampshire School Patriot Act, which required all school districts to authorize a time for a voluntary recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Does contended that the recitation violated their parental rights, their children's rights, the Free Exercise Clause and the Equal Protection Clause. On September 30, 2009, the court found that the statute was constitutional, did not violate the students' or parents' right under the Free Exercise Clause, and that the act did not violate the student's right under the Equal Protection Clause.

Houston City Council Member Sued for Praying the Lord's Prayer

Staley v. Houston, No. 4:09-3394 (S.D. Tex. 2009)

Houston City Council member Anne Clutterbuck was sued for praying the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of a council meeting. Ms. Clutterbuck had chosen the Lord's Prayer because she believed it to be inoffensive to persons

with various religious views. The court dismissed the case after a motion for summary judgment.

Two Gideons Arrested for Distributing Bibles on a Public Sidewalk

Gray v. Kohl, 568 F. Supp. 2d 1378 (S.D. Fla. June 18, 2008)

Two members of the Gideons' Key Largo Camp were arrested for distributing Bibles on a public sidewalk.

Evangelist Arrested for Speaking About His Faith in Public

Schaffer v. City of Jacksonville, No. 3:07-00053 (M.D. Fla. 2007)

John Schaffer was standing on public property at the Jacksonville Landing shopping center speaking to others about his faith in Jesus Christ. Officers approached Schaffer as he was talking with a passerby and told him to either stop speaking or leave the premises. When Schaffer attempted to tell the officers that he had the constitutional right to speak in public just like any other citizen, he was arrested and jailed overnight.

Man Arrested and Held in Jail for Distributing Religious Tracts on a Public Sidewalk

Baumann v. City of Cumming, Georgia, No. 2:07-0095 (N.D. Ga. Nov. 2, 2007)

Baumann was arrested for distributing religious tracts on a public sidewalk outside the City of Cumming's fairgrounds. It was alleged he had violated a city ordinance requiring parade and demonstration organizers to obtain a permit before engaging in such activities. The permit requirement, however, only applied to private organizations or groups of more than three persons. Baumann's multiple requests to view a copy of the ordinance were denied. After serving two days in jail, he was convicted before a municipal court judge and sentenced to time already served. Baumann was not notified that he would stand trial that day nor was he given the opportunity to obtain legal counsel.

Department of the Interior Employee Harassed for Objecting to Gay Pride Observance

Gee v. Kempthorne, No. 03-432, 2007 U.S. Dist. Lexis 6695 (D. Idaho Jan. 30, 2007)

On June 3, 2000, Kenneth Gee received an email from his boss at the Department of the Interior regarding President Clinton's proclamation encouraging government employees to celebrate and "observe gay and lesbian pride" during the month of June. Mr. Gee responded, notifying his boss of his sincere religious objection to receiving the emails. Mr. Gee's boss then asked him to retract and delete the email questioning the Department's policy of



promoting and celebrating homosexuality. Mr. Gee obeyed the order and deleted the email. Four days later, however, Mr. Gee was formally chastised in a meeting with three supervisors. Mr. Gee's boss informed him that management would review all of his outgoing email and that random checks of his computer and email would be done to ensure his compliance with Department policies. Mr. Gee filed a suit to protect his rights. The court dismissed Mr. Gee's First Amendment and Religious Freedom Restoration Act claims as moot because the Department changed its email policy.

Resident Assistant Prohibited from Leading Dormitory Bible Study

Steiger v. Lord-Larson, No. 05-0700 (W.D. Wis. 2006)

Lance Steiger, a resident assistant at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, was told he could not lead a Bible study in the basement of the dormitory where he was living. He was forced to file a federal lawsuit to protect his right to lead Bible studies in the dorm.

School District Bans Woman from Distributing Religious Literature on Public Sidewalk

Colston v. Crowley I.S.D., No. 4:06-00097 (N.D. Tex. 2006)

Mrs. Colston was banned from handing out religious literature on a public sidewalk in front of a public high school. The school district only allowed her to do so after she filed suit to protect her constitutional rights.

Lawsuit Required to Allow Nativity Scene Next to Menorah

Koenig v. City of Atlantic Beach, Florida, No. 3:05-1244 (M.D. Fla. 2005)

Town Center Park, operated jointly by the City of Atlantic Beach and the City of Neptune Beach, contained a 25-foot-tall Christmas tree and a large, privately provided, menorah. Koenig wanted to display a private Nativity scene in the park, but the request was denied because a Nativity scene is a "religious symbol." Following the filing of the lawsuit, the park permitted the Nativity scene to be displayed.

Lawsuit Challenges Ten Commandments Display in Maryland

Chambers v. City of Frederick, 373 F. Supp. 2d 567 (N.D. Md. 2005)

A Frederick resident objected to the Ten Commandments display in the city park that the Fraternal Order of the Eagles (Eagles) had donated in 1958. In response, the city sold that portion of the park to the Eagles, but a lawsuit was filed anyway. The district court held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Senior Citizens Banned from Praying or Singing Religious Songs at Senior Center

Barton v. City of Balch Springs, No. 3:03-2258 (N.D. Tex. 2004)

Senior citizens in Balch Springs, Texas, were told to stop praying before their meals, listening to inspirational religious messages, and singing gospel songs in their senior citizens' center because of a new city policy banning religion in public buildings. The citizens sued to defend their right to religious freedom. The Department of Justice also opened an investigation. The seniors were told that if they won their lawsuit, their meals would be taken away since praying over government-funded meals violates the "separation of church and state."

Lawsuit Challenges Ten Commandments Display in Habersham County, Georgia

Turner v. Habersham County, 290 F. Supp. 2d 1362 (N.D. Ga. Nov. 17, 2003)

Citizens challenged the display of the Ten Commandments at the Habersham County Courthouse. The court granted the injunction, ordering the removal of the display.

Lawsuit Challenges Virginia Pledge of Allegiance and National Motto at Public Schools

Myers v. Loudoun County School Bd., 251 F. Supp. 2d 1262 (E.D. Va. Feb. 21, 2003)

A lawsuit was filed challenging the constitutionality of two Virginia statutes, one that required students in public schools to say the Pledge of Allegiance and the other requiring the national motto to be posted at Virginia schools. The District Court held that the Pledge and the county's actions in allowing the Pledge to be said did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Stops Lease of Land to the Boy Scouts

Barnes-Wallace v. Boy Scouts of America, 275 F. Supp. 2d 1259 (S.D. Cal. 2003)

An agnostic family sued San Diego and the Boy Scouts because the city had leased some public parkland to the Boy Scouts. The family claimed the lease violated the Establishment Clause because the Boy Scouts do not allow agnostics to become members. A federal district court in California agreed with the family and held that the lease violated the Establishment Clause.

ACLU Sues to Remove Ten Commandments Display in Tennessee County Courthouse

ACLU of Tennessee v. Hamilton County, 202 F. Supp. 2d 757 (E.D. Tenn. May 3, 2002)

The ACLU filed suit, challenging the Ten Commandments displays in county



courthouses. The court granted the injunction holding that it violated the Establishment Clause.

ACLU Sues to Remove Ten Commandments Display in Tennessee County Courthouse

ACLU of Tennessee v. Rutherford County, 209 F. Supp. 2d 799 (M.D. Tenn. 2002)
The ACLU sued Rutherford County to challenge the Ten Commandments display in the county courthouse lobby. The court ordered the display removed.

Indiana ACLU Attacks Proposed Ten Commandments Display

Kimbley v. Lawrence County, Indiana, 119 F. Supp. 2d 856 (S.D. Ind. 2000)
The Indiana Civil Liberties Union filed suit in response to a proposed Ten Commandments display, which had been authorized by state law, seeking to prevent the display. The court granted an injunction to prevent the display, holding that it violated the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Forces Public Schools to Remove Ten Commandments Displays

Doe v. Harlan County Sch. Dist., 96 F. Supp. 2d 667 (E.D. Ky. May 5, 2000)
A Harlan student's parents filed suit to challenge the public schools' practice of posting the Ten Commandments in classrooms. In response to the lawsuit, the school district added other historical documents to the displays, but the lawsuit continued. The Eastern District of Kentucky granted an injunction, holding it was a violation of the Establishment Clause.

ACLU Forces City to Remove Cross from City Seal

ACLU v. City of Stow, 29 F. Supp. 2d 845 (N.D. Ohio Dec. 16, 1998)
The ACLU challenged the placement of a cross on Stow's city seal, claiming that the use of such a symbol served as an establishment of religion. The ACLU prevailed in the lawsuit because the court found that a reasonable observer would perceive the cross on the seal as an establishment of religion with the effect of advancing or promoting Christianity. The city was forced to remove the cross.

Lawsuit Ends Sixty-Year-Old Christmas Tradition in Somerset, MA

Amancio v. Town of Somerset, 28 F. Supp. 2d 677 (D. Mass. Nov. 23, 1998)
A Somerset resident filed a lawsuit challenging Somerset's Christmas display, which included a Nativity scene, holiday lights, a wreath, a Christmas tree and a plastic Santa Claus. The display had been a Somerset tradition for sixty years. The court held that the display violated the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Forces City to Remove Cross from Water Tower

Mendelson v. City of St. Cloud, 719 F. Supp. 1065 (M.D. Fla. Aug. 23, 1989)

A citizen sued the city claiming an illuminated Latin cross on a city water tower violated the Establishment Clause. The court determined that the cross did violate the Establishment Clause and ordered the cross to be removed from the water tower.

ACLU Attacks Privately-Funded Nativity Scene in Kentucky Capitol Building

ACLU of Kentucky v. Wilkinson, 701 F. Supp. 1296 (E.D. Ky. 1988)

The ACLU filed suit to challenge a Nativity scene in the Kentucky Capitol, seeking an injunction preventing the continued use of the Nativity scene and claiming the Nativity scene was an endorsement of religion. The court denied the injunction on condition that the state put a disclaimer on the display stating that the state intended no endorsement of religion and that no state funds were expended for the display.

Lawsuit Attempts to Stop Texas Christmas Celebration

Soc’y of Separationists, Inc. v. Clements, 677 F. Supp. 509 (W.D. Tex. 1988)

The Society of Separationists filed a lawsuit challenging the “Christmas Carol Program.” The program is an annual event in the Texas Capitol. When a Christmas tree is presented to Texas, politicians make speeches, the Texas Public Employees Association presents money to charity, Santa visits, singers perform Handel’s Messiah, and two religious carols are performed. The Separationists asserted that the program violates the Establishment Clause and sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the program from occurring. The court held that the State’s sponsoring of the event did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Lawsuit Attacks Christmas Display in Westland, Michigan

Doe v. City of Westland, No. 87-74468, 1987 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15321 (E.D. Mich. Dec. 23, 1987)

Doe, supported by the ACLU, brought a lawsuit to challenge a Christmas display in the Westland central city complex because it included a Nativity scene.

Illinois Mandates that Doctors Counsel About Abortion Options

The Pregnancy Care Center of Rockford v. Rauner, No. 2016MR741 (Ill. Ckt. Ct., Dec. 20, 2016)

Illinois passed a law requiring doctors to provide information about “legal treatment options.” This requirement applied even if the doctors hold religious objections to doing so, such as when a “legal treatment option” is an



abortion. Several doctors and clinics in Illinois filed a lawsuit challenging the new law. A state judge held that the law violated the “Speak, Write, and Publish Freely” Clause of the Illinois Constitution and issued an injunction stopping enforcement of the law.

Houston Health Clinic Employee Fired for Refusing to “Put Aside” Her Religious Beliefs About Birth Control

<https://firstliberty.org/cases/palma/>

Alexia Palma, a Catholic immigrant from Guatemala, worked at a Houston inner-city health clinic where she taught several classes, including one on “Becoming a Mom.” The clinic asked Palma to teach a class on birth control. Because the Catholic Church opposes birth control, Palma requested to just show a video instead of teach that class. This worked well for approximately eighteen months, but when new management came in, they gave Palma an ultimatum: “put aside” her “personal beliefs” and teach the class or be terminated. Even though teaching the birth control class would be approximately two percent of Palma’s job, and even though other employees had volunteered to teach the birth control class for Palma, the health clinic fired her. First Liberty Institute filed a complaint with the EEOC to defend Palma’s religious rights.

FFRF Pushes Michigan Town to Remove Nativity Scene Despite Recent Supreme Court Opinion

<https://www.onenewsnow.com/legal-courts/2016/12/22/atheists-lose-battle-over-manger-scene>

The FFRF, relying on the U.S. Supreme Court case *County of Allegheny v. ACLU*, demanded that Menominee, Michigan, remove its Nativity scene from the town park. The park also included other holiday decorations. However, in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, the Supreme Court heavily criticized *County of Allegheny’s* reasoning. In addition, the inclusion of other decorations in the area may have made the Nativity scene permissible even under *County of Allegheny*. While the town did temporarily remove the Nativity scene, it decided to fight the FFRF and returned the display.

ACLU Sues Knightstown, Indiana, for Cross on Christmas Tree

<http://fox59.com/2016/12/12/knightstown-removes-cross-atop-towns-christmas-tree-following-aclu-lawsuit/>

The ACLU sued Knightstown, Indiana, for including a cross on top of the town’s Christmas tree. Despite widespread support for the cross on the tree, the town capitulated to the ACLU and removed the cross.

Illinois Bed-and-Breakfast Fined over \$80,000 for Following Religious Convictions

Wathen v. Walder Vocuflo, Inc., No 11-0703 (Ill. H.R.C., Nov. 18, 2016)

The Timber Creek Bed-and-Breakfast refused to host a same-sex civil union ceremony because doing so would violate the owner's religious convictions. The owner said, "We are not looking for a fight, but when immoral laws are purposely passed (or deemed constitutional) that blatantly conflict with God's Word and when the heavy hand of government tries to force us as Christians to embrace sinful behavior, we have a moral obligation to resist and stand for Biblical truth." The Illinois Human Rights Commission has now ordered the bed and breakfast to be fined over \$80,000 in damages and attorney's fees for following the owner's religious convictions.

FFRF Says Police Officers May Not Be Present at Religious Events

<http://www.kcrg.com/content/news/Cedar-Rapids-area-churches-pray-for-law-enforcement-officers-402180565.html>

Several churches in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, area held prayer services outside law enforcement agencies to pray for the officers. The FFRF, however, sent letters warning that "[p]olice officers ... may not be present at religious events in their official capacity and may not appear in uniform." Besides the fact that this position would render police protection at religious events impossible, Cedar Rapids law enforcement has also disputed the FFRF's absurd claim.

FFRF Demands Wisconsin State Representative Stop Holding Bible Studies Before Work

<https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/27910-ffrf-objects-to-bible-study-meetings-in-wisconsin-capitol>

Wisconsin state representative Paul Tittl holds a weekly early-morning Bible study for legislators and their staff in his office at the state capitol building. The FFRF, upset to learn that a state representative might pray with others in his office before work, called the meetings "unconstitutional" and says that the private meetings send "an official message of endorsement of religion." Rep. Tittl responded to the FFRF's complaint by noting that the meetings are personal and have no relation to official matters.

Shipping Company Refuses to Accommodate Sikh Religious Requirement

<https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/11-15-16.cfm>

J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc., one of the largest logistics companies in North America, refused to accommodate the religious beliefs of four Sikh applicants who asked that they not be required to cut their hair as part of J.B.

Hunt's drug testing policy. The four applicants requested that J.B. Hunt use an alternative drug testing method. J.B. Hunt refused to accommodate the request and did not hire the Sikh applicants. In response, the EEOC threatened to sue J.B. Hunt for religious discrimination. Instead, to avoid litigation, J.B. Hunt agreed to hire the four Sikh applicants and revise its policies to avoid religious discrimination.

New Jersey Apartment Complex Refuses to Rent to Muslims

Porrino v. Greda, (N.J. Super. Ct., filed Oct. 19, 2016)

William Greda, owner of the Maple Garden apartment complex in Union County, New Jersey, declared to a woman wearing a khimar, "I don't rent to Muslims." When the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights sent a tester wearing a headscarf to the Maple Garden apartments, the tester was told that the apartment complex was not suitable for her because she was a woman. The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights filed a lawsuit against Greda and the apartment complex for illegal discrimination.

Florida Bans Father from Discussing Religion during Child Visitation

Koch v. Koch, No. 1D16-0478 (Fla. App., Sept. 28, 2016)

Following the Kochs' divorce, a Florida court issued a Final Judgment on Parenting Plan and Timesharing that prohibited Mr. Koch from discussion of "ANY religious matters during visitation with his children." A Florida appeals court upheld the restriction, determining that "threats of damnation" are not in the best interest of the children.

Muslim Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Fired for His Faith

<http://archive.knoxnews.com/news/crime-courts/judge-orders-100k-damages-for-ex-thp-trooper-fired-for-muslim-faith-3d0a06f1-e601-5045-e053-0100007f-394366771.html>

De'Ossie Dingus was a Tennessee Highway Patrol trooper and a Sunni Muslim. Even though Dingus worked as a trooper for ten years, he was fired after being labeled a potential terrorist because he objected to the highway patrol's showing of a video on the radicalization of children. Dingus's supervisor also told Dingus that he should have joined a Christian prayer meeting "for the good of the agency." Dingus sued the Tennessee Highway Patrol and won \$154,000 in back pay and benefits and \$100,000 in psychological damages.

Spokane, Washington, Fire Department Terminates Firefighter for Sending Religious Email

Sprague v. Spokane Valley Fire Department, No. 33352-3-III (Wa. Ct. App., Sept. 21, 2016)

Jonathan Sprague, founder of the Spokane Christian Firefighters Fellowship, was fired for using the fire department’s email system to send out emails announcing upcoming meetings of the Christian group. The fire department argued that it fired Sprague not because the emails were religious but because the email system was to be used for official business only. While the Washington State Court of Appeals, in a two-to-one decision, upheld the fire department’s termination, Chief Judge Fearing dissented, noting that the fire department permitted other emails and newsletters that were like those sent by Sprague, but from a non-religious perspective. Judge Fearing argued that the fire department engaged in viewpoint discrimination against Sprague’s religious beliefs.

FFRF Criticizes Presidential Candidates’ Faith

<http://www.christianexaminer.com/article/atheist-group-skewers-presidential-candidates-for-discussing-faith-prayer/51057.htm>

In the 2016 presidential election, both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton discussed their religious beliefs. Clinton said that she favored a president “who will pray with you, and for you” while walking “humbly with our God.” The FFRF reacted negatively to the candidates’ statements of faith, saying, “[W]e don’t need pious politicians who spend valuable time on their knees. ... Prayer doesn’t fix anything, but it does waste time and energy.”

Concrete Company Fires Truck Driver for Religious Beliefs About the Sabbath

<https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/9-8-16.cfm>

Michael Cole had been a truck driver for Greenville Ready Mix Concrete, Inc. in Winterville, North Carolina, for approximately seven years when he converted to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. As a Seventh-day Adventist, Cole could not work on Saturdays. While Cole’s regular schedule did not require him to work on Saturdays, he submitted a religious accommodation request to Greenville Ready Mix Concrete to ensure that he would not be scheduled to drive on Saturdays. Following Cole’s request, the concrete company scheduled him to work on a Saturday. When Cole informed the company that he could not do so, they fired him. The EEOC sued Greenville Ready Mix Concrete on Cole’s behalf for religious discrimination, and the

case settled when the concrete company agreed to pay \$42,500 and create an anti-discrimination policy.

Chairman of U.S. Civil Rights Commission Attacks Religious Freedom

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/sep/8/religious-freedom-religious-liberty-just-code-word/>

Martin Castro, chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, released a report entitled “Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties” in which Castro said, “The phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ will stand for nothing except hypocrisy so long as they remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance.” Several prominent legal scholars criticized the report and the comments attacking religious freedom.

EEOC Sues Christian Funeral Home for Following Its Religious Beliefs

<http://www.charismanews.com/us/59377-christian-funeral-home-takes-major-victory-in-transgender-lawsuit>

The EEOC sued RG & GR Harris Funeral Homes for firing Aimee Stephens after Stephens announced a male-to-female gender transition and refused to wear the male uniform required by the funeral homes. RG & GR Harris Funeral Homes is a religious ministry, and the owners of the funeral homes argued that they had a religious right to fire Stephens. A federal district court agreed and dismissed the EEOC’s lawsuit.

Boone County, Indiana, Jail Refuses to Serve Halal Meals

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/local/2016/08/18/aclu-uses-rfra-sue-jail-behalf-muslim-inmate/88945800/>

Gannon Thomas, a Muslim inmate in a jail in Boone County, Indiana, requested and was denied halal meals. He had requested the meals so that he could follow his religious practice. Halal meals exclude pork and require that other meats be slaughtered in certain ways. Thomas did not, however, require that his meals include meat. Thomas sued the county using Indiana’s new state Religious Freedom Restoration Act to ensure that his religious rights were protected.

Newspaper Bans Word “Christian,” Calling It “Offensive”

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/08/02/newspaper-lifts-ban-on-word-christian-deemed-too-offensive-to-print.html>

The *Knoxville News Sentinel* refused to run ads for the Cedar Springs Christian Stores, stating that the word “Christian” is “offensive.” Following the news-

paper's decision, supporters of the Christian stores sent "several complaints" to the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, causing the paper to reverse its decision and give the stores an extra two days of free ads.

American Bar Association Proposes Anti-Discrimination Rules that Tread on Religious Liberty

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/aug/17/how-the-lawyers-plan-to-stifle-speech-and-faith/>

The American Bar Association (ABA) adopted a model rule of ethics for lawyers, Model Rule 8.4, which makes it unethical for anyone licensed in the practice of law to "discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or socioeconomic status in conduct related to the practice of law." The ABA explained, however, that "conduct" includes "verbal conduct," i.e., speech, and that "related to the practice of law" includes "social activities." Under this model rule, even a lawyer speaking about his or her religious beliefs in church—a "social activity"—could face an ethics complaint if a listener interpreted the speech as discriminating "on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or socioeconomic status." Even if not convicted, accusations of unethical conduct are serious for lawyers and defending against them could require substantial resources.

Arizona Official Attacked for Offering to Take Employees' Prayer Requests to Holy Site

<https://stream.org/arizona-des-director-tim-jeffries-attacked-merely-asking-letters-catholic-charity-yet-state-charitable-campaigns-include-christian-organizations/>

Tim Jeffries, the director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security, is a Catholic and travels annually to a holy site in France. Jeffries offered to his employees that they could give him "special intentions"—essentially prayer requests—to take on his next trip to France. The Secular Coalition for Arizona called this offer "particularly egregious," even though Jeffries only offered a service to his employees that they were under no compulsion to accept.

Macy's Fires Catholic Employee for Stating His Religious Beliefs

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/07/25/lawsuit-macys-fired-worker-over-catholic-faith.html>

Javier Chavez had been a Macy's employee for over twenty-six years. Chavez started as a door guard and was eventually promoted to senior store detective at his Macy's in Flushing, Queens, New York. Chavez is also a devout Roman Catholic. A security guard under Chavez's command responded to

a complaint from a woman and her daughter who were afraid to enter a restroom because a man was in there. When the assistant store manager told Chavez that men who identify as women were permitted in the women's restroom, Chavez responded that that was against his religion and "contrary to the Bible." Chavez did not say that he would not enforce Macy's policy but only that his personal beliefs opposed that decision. Macy's responded by terminating Chavez.

Federal Government Threatens Native Americans for Religious Use of Eagle Feathers

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2016/07/07/native-american-bald-eagle-independence-day-july-column/86527316/#>

The Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas uses eagle feathers that they find in the wild—without harming any eagles—in their religious worship. Although the Lipan Apache Tribe is recognized by the State of Texas and by historians, the federal government has not recognized the Lipan Apache Tribe and has thus refused to permit the Lipan Apache Tribe to use eagle feathers. The federal government was willing to grant eagle feather permits to museums, scientists, zoos, farmers, and power companies, however. An undercover federal agent confiscated fifty eagle feathers from the Lipan Apache Tribe and threatened the worshippers with fines and imprisonment. The Lipan Apache Tribe sued the federal government under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act to protect its religious freedom to use eagle feathers. The government settled and agreed to revisit laws that restrict Native Americans from possessing eagle feathers.

Colorado Springs Bans Religious Ads on Bus Stop Benches

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/06/27/pastor-battles-colorado-city-over-jesus-related-ads-on-bus-benches.html?intcmp=hpbt3>

Pastor Lawson Perdue in Colorado Springs, Colorado, paid for ads on twenty bus stop benches to say "Jesus is Lord." The city transit agency, however, told Pastor Perdue that the ads were no longer allowed because they referred to Jesus. According to the transit authority, if they allowed the name of Jesus to be mentioned on an ad, they would also need to allow hate speech. Pastor Perdue is considering suing the city for violating his religious free speech rights.

FFRF Can't Take a Religious Joke

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/06/22/texas-city-fights-freedom-from-religion-foundation-over-gods-country-signs.html>

Hondo, Texas, displayed a sign stating, "This is God's Country. Please Don't Drive Through It Like Hell." The FFRF objected to this sign, arguing that it established a religion in Hondo. The FFRF also expressed concern that some may be confused by the sign, believing it to be an encouragement to speed. The mayor of Hondo responded to the FFRF's demand that the sign come down with, "There's no way in hell that sign is coming down."

American Atheists, Inc. Demand Sheriff Be Banned from Sharing His Religious Beliefs on Personal Facebook Page

<http://clevelandbanner.com/stories/us-district-judge-rules-against-american-atheists-inc,35973>

American Atheists, Inc. sought a temporary restraining order banning Sheriff Eric Watson of Bradley County, Ohio, from sharing his religious beliefs on his personal Facebook page as well as on his official Facebook page. While Sheriff Watson took down the Bradley County Sheriff's Office Facebook page, Sheriff Watson refused to stop sharing his faith on his personal Facebook page. A federal district court refused to issue the temporary restraining order.

ACLU and FFRF Complain About Iowa Governor's Signing of Proclamation Encouraging Reading of the Bible

<http://www.wowt.com/content/news/Groups-threaten-to-sue-Branstad--382135261.html>

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad signed a proclamation encouraging Iowans to read the Bible. The proclamation, like those signed by presidents going back to George Washington, was merely an encouragement and did not compel anyone to read the Bible. Nevertheless, the ACLU and the FFRF complained about the proclamation and stated that they were considering suing.

New York City Municipal Pool Attacked for Accommodating Religious Swimmers

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/06/06/no-men-allowed-women-only-pool-hours-draw-complaints-in-nyc.html>

A New York City municipal swimming pool implemented certain hours as women-only swim times as a religious accommodation for Hasidic Jewish women whose religious beliefs prevent them from swimming when men are present. Because of the swimming pool's accommodation of Hasidic Jewish

beliefs, someone complained to the New York City Commission on Human Rights. The city is keeping the female-only swim hours for the time being.

HHS Regulations Interpret Obamacare in Ways that Violate Religious Beliefs

http://nae.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HHS_OCR_Regulations.110615.pdf

Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), among other things, prohibits sex discrimination in health programs. The proposed regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Section 1557, however, interpret “sex discrimination” to include discrimination based on “termination of pregnancy,” which could be interpreted to require doctors to perform abortions. The proposed regulations would also require any doctor who performs a medically necessary surgery for a person to also perform that surgery if it would be in furtherance of transgender surgery. For example, if a doctor performed a hysterectomy on a woman because she developed cancer, Section 1557 would also require that doctor to perform a hysterectomy on a person transitioning from female to male, a practice that violates the teachings of the Catholic church and, therefore, the religious beliefs of many doctors. Unlike other civil rights protections, Section 1557 has no religious freedom exemption.

Coal Mining Company Refuses to Accommodate Employee's Religious Objection to the Use of a Hand Scanner

<http://legalnewsline.com/stories/510725038-w-va-worker-eeoc-win-mark-of-the-beast-case>

Consolidated Coal, a West Virginia coal mining company, adopted a new biometric hand scanner with which to clock employees in and out. An evangelical Christian employee of the company believed that the biometric hand scanner could be part of the “Mark of the Beast” and refused to use it, asking instead to continue using the old system of clocking in and out. When the coal mining company refused to permit the employee to use the old system and told the employee that he would be punished if he didn’t adopt the new hand scanner, the employee retired. The EEOC filed a lawsuit against the coal mining company and received a verdict against the company for over \$500,000 for the company’s refusal to permit the religious accommodation.

Tiffany & Co. Executive Fired After Explaining Her Religious Beliefs

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/catholic-tiffany-exec-fired-jews-killed-jesus-article-1.2633996>

Kristin Rightnour, a devout Catholic, was a marketing executive for Tiffany &

Co. While she was discussing upcoming Easter plans with two co-workers, one Catholic and one Jewish, the Jewish co-worker asked Rightnour to explain the meaning of Easter. Four months later, a human resources manager reported to Rightnour that a colleague alleged that she had stated, “The Jewish people killed Jesus.” Rightnour denied having said anything of the sort. She was placed on a one-year probation and was fired the following year. Rightnour filed a lawsuit against Tiffany & Co., asserting that they fired her based on their “perception that as a practicing Catholic, [Rightnour] held the belief that ‘Jewish people killed Jesus.’”

Hand-Painting and Calligraphy Business Sues to Not Be Forced to Violate Religious Beliefs

Brush & Nib Studio, LC v. City of Phoenix, No. CV2016-052251 (Ariz. Super. Ct., filed May 12, 2016)

Joanna Duka and Breanna Koski are Christian artists who own and operate the Brush & Nib Studio, a hand-painting and calligraphy company that creates artwork for clients. Part of the Brush & Nib Studio’s business involves creating hand-lettered wedding invitations. Duka and Koski hold the religious belief that marriage is between one man and one woman. However, the Phoenix City Code bans even religious companies like the Brush & Nib Studio from refusing to provide services on the basis of sexual orientation and from communicating that any person would be “unwelcome, objectionable, unacceptable, undesirable, or not solicited” on the basis of sexual orientation. The penalty for violating this provision is \$2,500 per day and 6 months in jail. Because their religious beliefs prohibit them from participating in a same-sex wedding, Duka and Koski sued the City of Phoenix to stop enforcement of that provision of the Phoenix City Code should a same-sex couple seek their art for a same-sex wedding.

Wyoming Judge Censured for Stating Her Religious Beliefs

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ruth-neely-wyoming-judge-against-same-sex-marriage-censured/>

Ruth Neely, a municipal judge in Pinedale, Wyoming, had never been asked to perform a same-sex wedding. When asked by a reporter whether she was excited to perform same-sex weddings, however, Judge Neely stated that she has a religious belief that marriage is between one man and one woman and that she would therefore be unable to perform a same-sex wedding. Based on this statement, the Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics sought to remove Judge Neely from her position for judicial misconduct.

The Wyoming Supreme Court refused to remove Judge Neely but instead censured her for violating the judicial conduct code.

FFRF Demands Removal of Memorial Cross at Memorial Cross Park in Santa Clara, California

<http://www.theblaze.com/news/2016/04/22/lifelong-atheist-sues-for-removal-of-longstanding-cross-monument-inside-california-public-park-an-obvious-and-blatant-establishment-of-religion/>

The FFRF filed a lawsuit against Santa Clara, California, seeking to remove the memorial cross from Memorial Cross Park. The cross commemorates an eighteenth-century Spanish mission that once stood in the park. The FFRF called the presence of the cross “an obvious and blatant establishment of religion.”

Rowan County, Kentucky, Clerk Jailed for Refusing to Put Own Name on Marriage Licenses in Violation of Her Religious Beliefs

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/kentucky-clerk-kim-davis-who-refused-issue-marriage-licenses-gays-n596476>

County Clerk Kim Davis of Rowan County, Kentucky, held a religious belief that marriage is between one man and one woman. Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s legalization of same-sex marriage, Davis could not put her name on a marriage license for a same-sex marriage without violating her religious beliefs. A federal district court ordered Davis to provide the marriage licenses, and when she refused, she was jailed for contempt of court. Following Davis’s being jailed, Kentucky passed a law accommodating Davis’s religious beliefs by removing the requirement that county clerks place their own name on marriage certificates.

ACLU Stops Los Angeles County from Including Historically Accurate Cross on Seal

<http://www.opposingviews.com/i/religion/judge-la-county-must-remove-cross-seal>

The seal of Los Angeles County includes an image of the San Gabriel Mission without its historical cross. In 2014, in order to be historically accurate, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to include the San Gabriel Mission cross on the seal. The ACLU sued Los Angeles County to stop the image of the mission from being updated to include the historically accurate cross. A federal district court blocked the addition of the cross to the seal, but the county is considering appealing.

FFRF Demands Clayton, New Jersey, Change Its Seal and Motto

http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2016/04/nj_borough_faces_off_with_atheist_group_over_town.html

The FFRF sent a letter to Clayton, New Jersey, demanding that the town change its motto, “A great place to live and play, work and pray,” and its seal, which includes a house, a church, a factory, and a fisherman on a boat. Clayton has used the motto and seal since the 1960s. The town refused FFRF’s demand to change.

FFRF Demands End to Program Encouraging Prayer for Police

<http://wjhl.com/2015/12/10/atheist-group-wants-johnson-city-police-to-end-adopt-a-cop-program/>

<http://wjhl.com/2016/03/30/despite-push-from-atheist-group-to-end-it-jcpd-adopt-a-cop-program-to-continue/>

The Johnson City, Tennessee, police chaplains and two support groups started an “Adopt a Cop” program to encourage citizens to pray for and encourage police officers in the department. When the FFRF heard of this program, however, it sent a letter to the city demanding that the “Adopt a Cop” program be stopped. The Johnson City Police Department refused to stop the program.

Children Vaccinated over Parents’ Religious Objection While Temporarily in State Custody

In re Deng, No. 328826 (Ct. App. Mich., Mar. 22, 2016)

The Dengs have four children. Following a determination that the Dengs were unfit to serve as parents for their four children, the children were made temporary wards of the state while the Dengs received a case service plan with the aim of reunifying the family. While the Dengs’ children were in the custody of the state, the state decided to vaccinate the children against the Dengs’ religious convictions. Even though the Dengs’ children were only temporary wards of the state, a Michigan court held that the Dengs had “forfeited the right” to make even religious decisions as to the vaccination of their children.

Bakers Threatened for Following Religious Beliefs

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/02/25/texas-bakers-face-threats-after-declining-to-bake-gay-wedding-cake.html?intcmp=hplnws>

Edie and David Delorme own Kern’s Bake Shop in Longview, Texas. When Ben Valencia and Luis Marmolejo asked the Delormes to bake a wedding cake for their same-sex wedding, the Delormes refused, citing their religious conviction that marriage is between one man and one woman. Following the

Delormes' refusal, they "were overwhelmed with a number of threats against the business and their family." One of the messages that the Delormes received said, "See you in Hell, lady." Another called them "[r]acist criminals." The Delormes refuse to make any cake that violates their religious beliefs, including any alcohol or tobacco related cakes and any risqué cakes. No lawsuit has been filed against the Delormes.

FFRF Objects to Church's Name on Tower Built on Church's Land

<http://www.newson6.com/story/31489419/religious-freedom-group-threatens-to-sue-over-name-on-ba-water-tower>

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, needed land owned by First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow for the city's new water tower. First Baptist Church agreed to let the city have the land in exchange for painting the church's name on the new water tower. Once the FFRF learned that a water tower had the name of a church painted on it, however, the FFRF threatened to sue if the city did not remove the name. The Broken Arrow city council refused to paint over the church's name and stated that the display was "simply to recognize them for the land contribution."

Justice of the Peace Investigated for Permitting Chaplains to Help Grieving Families and Open Court with Prayer

<https://firstliberty.org/cases/judgemack/>

Judge Wayne Mack was elected Justice of the Peace for Montgomery County, Texas. Because Montgomery County has no medical examiner, when a person dies in the county, Judge Mack is called to the scene to serve in that role. As one of the first responders to a death, Judge Mack found it difficult to serve the emotional needs of mourners at scenes that are often tragic while also fulfilling his professional duties. To solve this problem and provide better care for the citizens of Montgomery County, Judge Mack started a volunteer chaplaincy program that was open to all religious leaders in the county. In this program, if a family at the scene of a death requested a chaplain, one of the volunteer religious leaders would come to the scene of the death to comfort friends and family while Judge Mack conducted his examination. Judge Mack recognized the service of these volunteer chaplains by inviting them to solemnize his court proceedings with a short prayer before he entered the courtroom. Following a complaint from the FFRF, however, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct launched an investigation into Judge Mack's chaplaincy program and the opening prayers. First Liberty Institute defended Judge Mack and the chaplaincy program before the commission. While the commission dismissed the complaint against Judge Mack, it is-

sued a letter “strongly caution[ing him] against continuing with the Justice Court Chaplaincy Program and [his] current courtroom prayer practice.” In response to this decision by the commission, the Texas Attorney General issued an opinion clarifying that Judge Mack’s program is constitutional.

NASA Bans “Jesus” from Announcement Emails

<https://firstliberty.org/newsroom/victory-nasa-johnson-space-center-employees-win-battle-to-use-the-name-jesus/>

NASA permitted employee groups to send out emails announcing upcoming meetings until the Johnson Space Center (JSC) Praise & Worship Club sent out an email announcing an upcoming meeting with the theme “Jesus is our life.” NASA informed the JSC Praise & Worship Club that, while they could announce upcoming meetings, they could not mention the name of Jesus in their announcements. After First Liberty Institute sent a demand letter to NASA opposing such religious viewpoint discrimination, NASA permitted the JSC Praise & Worship Club to include the name of Jesus in its announcement emails.

Kansas Post Office Removes “God Bless America” Banner After FFRF Complaint

<http://ksn.com/2016/01/28/god-bless-america-banner-comes-down-at-pittsburg-post-office/>

A post office in Pittsburg, Kansas, following the September 11 attacks, displayed a banner that said, “God Bless America.” When the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) learned of the banner, however, they sent a letter to the post office, and the banner was removed.

Private Farm Sued for Not Hosting Same-Sex Wedding

Matter of Gifford v. McCarthy, No. 520410 (N.Y. App. Div., Jan. 14, 2016)

The owners of Liberty Ridge Farm in Schaghticoke, New York, were sued for politely declining to host a same-sex wedding, based on their religious beliefs, at the farm where they live. The owners offered to permit the couple to view the farm as a potential venue for the reception instead. The New York Division of Human Rights ordered the owners to pay a \$10,000 fine and \$3,000 in emotional damages to the couple. A state appellate court upheld the fine.

Colorado Forces Bakeries to Make Pro-Same-Sex Marriage Cakes But Allows Bakeries to Opt Out of Making Anti-Same-Sex Marriage Cakes

Mullins v. Masterpiece Cakeshop, Inc., 2015 COA 115 (Colo. Ct. App. Aug. 13, 2015)

Jack Phillips of the Masterpiece Cakeshop in Denver, Colorado, was sued for

refusing to participate in a same-sex wedding by crafting a wedding cake. The owner of the bakery explained that he would be happy to make the couple any other baked item but that he could not promote a same-sex ceremony because of his faith. The couple filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which ruled against the bakery. By contrast, the same commission found that three bakeries were not guilty of discrimination when they refused to make a cake with an anti-same-sex marriage message.

ACLU Seeks to Remove Ten Commandments from State Capitol

Prescott v. Okla. Capitol Pres. Comm'n, 373 P.3d 1032 (Okla. June 30, 2015)

In 2009, Oklahoma Representative Mike Ritze proposed legislation for a privately funded monument of the Ten Commandments on the Oklahoma state capitol grounds. The proposal received bipartisan support from both the state House of Representatives and the Senate, with former Democratic Governor Brad Henry signing the bill into law. Less than a year after the erection of the monument, the ACLU of Oklahoma filed a lawsuit to have the monument removed, alleging that it constitutes an unlawful “appropriation of public property” in support of religion. The Oklahoma Supreme Court held that the Ten Commandments monument must be removed because it violates Oklahoma’s constitution.

St. Louis, Missouri, Prohibits Muslim Cab Drivers from Wearing Religious Attire

Naeem v. Metropolitan Taxicab Commission, No. 1322-CC09365 (Mo. Ckt. Ct., June 22, 2015)

The St. Louis, Missouri, Metropolitan Taxicab Commission (MTC) required all taxicab drivers in St. Louis to follow a dress code. Raja Naeem, a Muslim cab driver, was issued over \$800 in citations and had his license revoked because he wore religious attire that the MTC determined was in violation of its dress code. Naeem filed a lawsuit against the MTC, and a judge held that the MTC’s refusal to allow religious attire violated Naeem’s constitutional rights.

Oklahoma Supreme Court Strikes Down Ten Commandments Monument

Prescott v. Okla. Capitol Pres. Comm'n, 2015 OK 54 (Okla. 2015)

The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that a privately-funded Ten Commandments Monument, located at the state’s capitol, violated a provision of the state’s constitution that restricts government funding to religious institutions. Attorney General Scott Pruitt, who defended the monument, commented that the court came to the wrong conclusion because it ignored the profound

historical impact of the Ten Commandments on the foundation of Western Law. The monument had just been restored after being shattered by a citizen.

Ohio Judges Cannot Opt Out of Performing All Marriages Due to Religious Belief

http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/Boards/BOC/Advisory_Opinions/2015/Op_15-001.pdf

The Ohio Board of Professional Conduct issued an advisory opinion stating that state judges must marry any couple or opt out of performing all weddings. The opinion also states that judges may not decline to perform marriages in order to avoid marrying same-sex couples based on his or her personal, moral or religious beliefs. Critics of the opinion question why a judge may not opt out of performing marriages in an exercise of his or her religious beliefs in districts where there is no access problem for same-sex couples seeking marriage.

Pastor / Police Officer Fired for Visiting Parishioner in Jail

Fierro v. Park City Mun. Corp., 323 P.3d 601 (Utah Ct. App. 2014)

Michael Fierro was a police officer for Park City, Utah, but also served as a lay pastor for a local Mormon church. When a parishioner from Fierro's church was incarcerated, Fierro obtained special permissions from his superiors to arrange for a visit. However, the Park City Employee Transfer and Discharge Appeal Board decided that Fierro abused his police privileges in the visit and consequently fired him. Seeking to protect his job and his ecclesiastical privileges, Fierro filed a lawsuit. The Utah Court of Appeals found that Fierro fulfilled all the proper requirements in his visit and set aside his termination.

Woman Held for Psychiatric Treatment Because She Prayed and Read Her Bible in a Hospital

Doe v. St. Vincent Charity Medical Center (filed Mar. 10, 2014)

A Cleveland woman became disoriented in the fifteenth day of a water-only fast. After speaking with her mother, the woman went to St. Vincent Charity Medical Center where she was treated for water intoxication. At the hospital, the woman began to pray and read her Bible. A doctor in the hospital asserted that the woman's Bible reading and audible praying were evidence of mental illness. The hospital then kept the woman in the psychiatric ward for five days and attempted to get a court order having her involuntarily committed. The woman, who is a Pentecostal Christian, sued the hospital for false arrest and violation of patient's rights.

Christian Scientist Has Drivers License Revoked for Refusing Blood Test

State v. Milewski, 841 N.W.2d 581 (Wis. Ct. App. Nov. 27, 2013)

Victoria Milewski, a Christian Scientist, was pulled over and arrested under suspicion of driving under the influence of an intoxicant. When asked to submit to a chemical test of her blood, Milewski refused, informing the police that her religion did not permit the intrusion of a needle into her body. Consequently, Milewski was sent a notice of intent to revoke her driving privileges due to her refusal. Milewski filed a lawsuit claiming that her refusal was reasonable, but a Wisconsin state appeals court ruled against her, stating that she failed to actually argue a burden to her religion.

FFRF Sues to End Arizona Day of Prayer

Freedom From Religion Foundation v. Brewer, No. 1 CA-CV 12-0684, 2013 Ariz. App. Unpub. LEXIS 671 (Ariz. App. June 11, 2013)

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) filed a lawsuit against the state of Arizona to end the Arizona Day of Prayer. After a U.S. District Court dismissed the suit because FFRF could not show injury, FFRF filed a complaint in a state court alleging violations of the state constitution. The Arizona State Court of Appeals dismissed the lawsuit because FFRF did not have standing to bring the suit.

Christian Photographer Fined for Refusing to Photograph Same-Sex Wedding

Elane Photography, LLC v. Willock, No. 33,687 (N.M. 2013)

A Christian photography company was sued after declining for religious reasons to take a job photographing a homosexual couple's commitment ceremony. The New Mexico Human Rights Commission ordered the photographer to pay over \$6,600 in attorney's fees. The New Mexico Supreme Court affirmed, with one justice stating that the photographers "now are compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives." The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

Bed and Breakfast Ordered to Rent Rooms to Homosexual Couples

Cervelli v. Aloha Bed & Breakfast, No. 11-1-3103-12 (Haw. 1st Ckt. 2013)

Lambda Legal filed suit against Hawaii's Aloha Bed & Breakfast for refusing to rent a room to a lesbian couple because of religious beliefs of the bed and breakfast's owners. The Hawaii Civil Rights Commission also intervened in the case against the bed and breakfast. The court held that the bed and breakfast violated Hawaii's public accommodation laws and must rent rooms to homosexual couples.

FFRF Sues to Stop Colorado Governor's 2004 Day of Prayer Proclamation

Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. v. Hickenlooper, 2012 WL 1638718 (Co. App. May 10, 2012)

The Colorado Court of Appeals held that the governor's 2004 Day of Prayer proclamation violated Colorado's constitution because it implied that those who pray enjoy a more favorable political status than those who do not.

Citizen Sues to End Prayers at Town Meetings in Franklin, Vermont

Hackett v. Town of Franklin, No. 77-11 (Ver. Super. Ct., filed May 29, 2012)

A citizen of Franklin, Vermont, regularly attended annual town meetings. The town included prayer in its meetings, often led by a local minister. The citizen sued the town, and the court enjoined the town from continuing such prayers, finding that by including the prayers, the town compelled the citizen to attend religious worship.

Hutterite Religious Community Forced to Provide Insurance to Workers

Big Sky Colony, Inc. v. Mont. Dep't of Lab. and Indus., 291 P.3d 1231 (Mont. 2012)

Labor unions and construction lobbyists in Montana complained that the Hutterites, a religious community, were receiving a "competitive advantage" because—based on 500-year-old religious practices—they did not provide compensation for their workers, including compensation insurance. The Hutterites already provide comprehensive care to all members of the community as part of their religious commitments. Nevertheless, the state responded to complaints by forcing the Hutterites to provide compensation insurance to their workers—an unnecessary and direct threat to the 500-year-old religious practice of holding property in common and not expecting compensation. Because Hutterite beliefs preclude them from participating in the political process, the state legislature never consulted the Hutterite community before passing the law. The Montana Supreme Court upheld the law, but the Hutterites are seeking review by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Commission Rules Bed-and-Breakfast Cannot Refuse to Host Same-Sex Civil Union

Wathen v. Beall Mansion Bed & Breakfast, No. 2011-SP-2486 (Ill. Human Rights Comm'n, Nov. 1, 2011)

Jim Walder, the owner of TimberCreek Bed-and-Breakfast, allowed same-sex couples to rent guest rooms but declined to host a same-sex civil union ceremony in 2011 due to his faith-based beliefs about marriage. He explained to the couple his religious belief against participating in the same-sex cer-

emony. The Illinois Human Rights Commission ruled that Walder violated an anti-discrimination law and is determining how much to fine him.

Kentucky Statute Attacked for Mentioning Reliance on God

Kentucky Office of Homeland Security v. Christerson, No. 2009-1650, 2011 WL 5105253 (Ky. Ct. App. Oct. 28, 2011)

A Kentucky statute and policy were attacked on state and federal constitutional grounds for mentioning reliance on God. A Kentucky appeals court upheld the statute as a historical reference that does not promote one religion over another.

Illinois Pharmacists Forced to Sue for Right to Refuse to Dispense Abortifacient Drugs

Morr-Fitz, Inc. v. Blagojevich, No. 2005-495 (Ill. Ck. Ct. Apr. 5, 2011)

Pharmacists Luke Vander Bleek and Glen Kosirog filed a lawsuit after Governor Rod Blagojevich issued an “Emergency Rule” stating that pharmacists cannot refuse to fill prescriptions for emergency contraceptives. After a five-year legal battle, an Illinois judge ruled that the “Emergency Rule” violated the First Amendment and the Illinois Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Lawsuit Attacks Privately-Owned Menorah in Downtown Area of Poughkeepsie, New York

Chabad of Mid-Hudson Valley v. City of Poughkeepsie, 907 N.Y.S.2d 286 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 2010)

A New York Supreme Court found that a privately owned, eighteen-foot-tall menorah did not violate the Establishment Clause. The decoration is owned by the Chabad of Mid-Hudson Valley, which puts it up in the downtown area of Poughkeepsie, New York, every year. Because the menorah is also displayed alongside other secular Christmas decorations, the court found that the menorah did not violate the Establishment Clause. However, the court maintained that it would be a violation of the Establishment Clause for the city to use its personnel and power to put up the menorah.

Firefighters Harassed for Religious Convictions Against Participating in Gay Pride Parade

Ghiotto v. City of San Diego, No. D055029 (Ct. App. Cal., filed Oct. 14, 2010)

San Diego, California, hosted a “Gay Pride Parade” and demanded that its firefighters participate in their official capacities or face retaliation. Four of those firefighters were Christians who objected to attending the parade because of their religious beliefs. The city threatened the firefighters with disciplinary action if they refused to participate. During the parade, the fire-

fighters were subject to verbal abuse and sexual gestures. The firefighters sued the city and were awarded approximately \$30,000.

Political Signs Permitted but Religious Signs Banned in Berkeley County, South Carolina

Moultrie v. Berkeley County, South Carolina, No. 2:10-2584 (D.S.C., filed Oct. 5, 2010)

Berkeley County, South Carolina, required its residents to obtain a permit to place signs in their yards. Political signs and for sale signs were deemed appropriate, but signs that carry a religious message were not. One resident, Moultrie, was cited for having signs with Bible verses on them. Moultrie filed suit against the county alleging violations of free expression, free exercise, and equal protection rights. The case settled.

Evangelist Sues for Right to Preach in California Shopping Mall

Snatchko v. Westfield, LLC, 187 Cal.App.4th 469 (Cal. Ct. App. 2010)

Snatchko wanted to preach the Gospel to shoppers in Westfield, LLC's shopping mall in Roseville, California. After being prohibited from sharing the Gospel to shoppers, Snatchko sued the mall's owner. Snatchko alleged that the restriction violated his First Amendment rights. The California appellate court agreed with him and found the mall's policy to provide stress-free shopping to patrons vague and not a substantial enough interest to take away Snatchko's free speech rights.

Pharmacist Fined for Following Religious Beliefs

Noesen v. Dep't. of Regulation and Licensing, 311 Wis. 2d 237 (Wis. Ct. App. 2008)

A pharmacist was fined over \$20,000 and had restrictions placed on his license after he refused to give a patient oral contraceptives because their use is against his religious beliefs as a Roman Catholic.

Lawsuit Attacks South Carolina Ten Commandments Display

Young v. County of Charleston, 1999 WL 33530383 (S.C. Com. Pl. 1999)

A court struck down a city courthouse Ten Commandments display as a violation of the Establishment Clause.

FFRF Sues City of Denver After Pope's Visit

Freedom From Religion Foundation v. Romer, 921 P.2d 84 (Colo. App. 1996)

After the Pope visited Denver for World Youth Day, The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit for an injunction and damages against the City of Denver, council members, and Arapaho County officials. They asserted

that using a state park for religious services, temporarily closing the park to the public, and the use of state funds to facilitate the visit violated the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The District Court dismissed the claim. The Colorado appeals court held that 1) the injunction claim was moot, since the event was already over, and 2) city, county, and state officials could not be sued for damages in their official capacity under §1983.

Lawsuit Attacks Nativity Scene in Waunakee, Wisconsin

King v. Village of Waunakee, 517 N.W.2d 671 (Wis. 1994)

Citizens filed a lawsuit challenging a Nativity scene displayed during the Christmas season, seeking to eradicate the religious symbol from the public square. The Wisconsin Supreme Court held that the display did not violate the Establishment Clause or the Wisconsin State Constitution.

Lawsuit Challenges Georgia Courthouse Ten Commandments Display

Harvey v. Cobb County, 811 F. Supp. 669 (N.D. Ga. 1993), *aff'd per curiam*, 15 F. 3d 1097 (11th Cir. 1994)

Plaintiffs filed suit challenging framed panels of the Ten Commandments and the Great Commandment displayed at the county courthouse. The court concluded that the displays were unconstitutional, but the court allowed a stay so that the county could incorporate nonreligious, historical items, which according to the court would transform the display to fit within constitutional guidelines.

Student Given Failing Grade Because School Refuses to Accommodate Religious Travel

Johnson v. Shineman, 658 S.W.2d. 910 (Mo. App. 1983)

A student received a failing grade in music class because he could not make the final group performance, which was required to pass. The student claimed religious necessity to travel, but the school denied student's request for exemption from final performance. The court held in favor of the school.

Christian Bakery Compelled to Bake Same-Sex Wedding Cake or Close Shop

<http://firstliberty.org/cases/kleins/>

Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa in Oregon, politely declined to design a cake for a same-sex wedding celebration. Although the bakers would bake a cake for the couple to celebrate other events, they could not create a cake endorsing a same-sex wedding due to their religious beliefs. A lawsuit was filed against the bakery, which included a charge against the Kleins for talking about their faith-based reason for declining. The Oregon Labor Commission ordered the bakers to pay \$135,000, and the

bakery has been forced to close. First Liberty Institute is representing the Kleins as they take their case to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

LGBT Organization Sues Christian-Owned T-Shirt Company for Refusing to Make Pride Shirts

<http://dailysignal.com/2016/12/14/this-small-business-owner-didnt-want-to-make-shirts-for-gay-pride-festival-now-hes-in-court/>

The Gay and Lesbian Services Organization sued a Christian-owned T-shirt making company called “Hands on Originals” for refusal to make gay-pride T-shirts. The company had bid on the order before it knew the message the shirts would carry or that they were for the Pride festival. The suit alleges discrimination based on sexual orientation in public accommodation. A Kentucky circuit court ruled in favor of Hand on Originals, but the decision is now being appealed.

Muslim Employees File Complaint After Employer Refuses Prayer Breaks

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/money/2016/05/24/muslims-file-complaint-against-ariens-co/84885462/>

A manufacturing company fired seven Muslim employees for taking un-scheduled prayer breaks. The company said it provided prayer rooms for workers on their regular breaks but claims that it is an undue burden on them for Muslim employees to take breaks outside of the two ten-minute breaks allotted as it could cost them a great amount of money in lost productivity. The employees filed a complaint with the EEOC and are considering filing a lawsuit.

Cracker Barrel Did Not Let Worker Attend Sunday Morning Church

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/crime/dp-nws-eeoc-filing-20150929-story.html>

Darika Jackson filed an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint for religious and racial discrimination against Cracker Barrel Old Country Store in Virginia. The store manager refused to grant a religious accommodation that would have allowed her to attend church on Sunday mornings. After she contacted the corporate office to file a complaint, her hours were reduced and she was terminated.

Courthouse Defends “In God We Trust” Installation

http://www.mcdowellnews.com/news/in-god-we-trust-now-installed-on-county-buildings/article_f48cd5f4-63c8-11e5-85da-b79f3885419c.html

The McDowell County Courthouse in North Carolina has posted the nation’s motto, “In God We Trust,” over the front entrance. There was no cost to the



county to install the sign. Commission Chairman David Walker commented to opponents of the display that the Supreme Court has ruled that the national motto may be displayed on county-owned property.

ExpressJet Suspends Muslim Flight Attendant for Abiding by Faith

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/05/travel/muslim-flight-attendant-feat/>

Charee Stanley, a Muslim flight attendant for ExpressJet, was suspended after refusing to serve alcohol to passengers based upon her religious beliefs. The airline originally agreed to allow other flight attendants on her flights to serve alcohol instead. However, she was suspended after a co-worker complained. The co-worker's complaint also noted that she carried a book with "foreign writings" and wore a headscarf. Stanley has brought an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint for discrimination.

County Clerk Goes to Jail for Not Issuing Same-Sex Marriage Licenses

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/kentucky-clerk-kim-davis-held-contempt-court-n421126>

Kim Davis, a county clerk for Rowan County, Kentucky, refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Judge David Bunning ordered her to jail for contempt of court for failing to issue licenses, stating that she would be released only when she agreed to follow his order. Five of the six deputy clerks under Davis testified that they would issue same-sex marriage licenses.

Chick-fil-A Delayed at Denver Airport Due to Owner's Religious Beliefs

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/08/21/no-airport-concessions-for-opponents-of-same-sex-marriage/>

The Denver City Council questioned a concession agreement with Chick-fil-A at the Denver International Airport due to the owner's religious beliefs. Some councilmembers noted concern with profits made by Chick-fil-A going toward causes with which they disagree. Legal scholars note the potential First Amendment violation of singling out a business for its religious and political opinions.

Belen's Nativity Scene Under Attack Despite Bethlehem Ties

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/08/13/mayor-seething-after-groups-call-to-take-down-nativity-scene-thats-been-in-a-city-park-for-decades/>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has set its sights on removing a Nativity scene in the little town of Belen, whose name translates to Bethlehem. Belen Mayor Jerah Cordova commented that the town takes pride in its name, and the organization does not understand the cultural importance

of the display to the town's residents. Since it was first established in 1992, the Nativity scene has been a permanent display in a city park.

FFRF Attacks "In God We Trust" Bumper Stickers

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/08/05/why-officers-are-putting-in-god-we-trust-bumper-stickers-on-their-patrol-cars/>
<http://www.inquisitr.com/2331894/missouri-sheriff-departments-asked-to-remove-in-god-we-trust/>

At least ten sheriff's departments have begun to post bumper stickers of the nation's motto, "In God We Trust," on their patrol cars. The Freedom From Religion Foundation has sent letters to these sheriff's departments calling the nation's motto "inappropriate and unconstitutional." Many departments, including Laclede County Sheriff's Department and the Stone County Sheriff's Office, are not backing down.

"You're Not Welcome Here!" Yelled at Muslim Group

<http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2015/08/heroes-in-farmersville-muslim-cemetery-fuss-religious-liberty-lovin-baptists.html/>

At a city council meeting, the Islamic Association of Collin County, Texas, proposed to build a Muslim cemetery in Farmersville, Texas, to serve the local Muslim community. However, many in the audience made it clear that they wanted to shut out the Muslims community, jeering and interrupting the presentation. One man yelled, "You're not welcome here!" In a written response, Farmersville First Baptist Church pastor Bart Barber urged the town to respect religious freedom for all Americans.

Florida Sheriff Defies "In God We Trust" Bumper Sticker Opponents

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jul/27/frank-mckeithen-florida-sheriff-defies-in-god-we-t/?page=all>

After an increase in violence against police, Bay County Sheriff Frank McKeithen decided to post the nation's motto "In God We Trust" on the county's patrol cars. He hopes that the move will help reassure the public that his officers are committed to conduct themselves ethically while on duty. In response, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) demanded that the sheriff remove the nation's motto, which is also Florida's motto, from the patrol cars. The sheriff simply stated that he was not afraid of the ACLU.

Newspaper Editor Fired for Blog Post About a Bible Translation

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2015/07/27/how-this-newspaper-editor-reacted-when-he-saw-a-gay-friendly-bible-got-him-fired-but-heres-what-happened-when-he-fought-back/>

Bob Eschliman, the editor-in-chief of the Newton Daily News in Newton, Iowa, was fired for a personal blog post sharing his opinions about a Bible translation. Eschliman's blog post was critical of the "Queen James Bible," a translation that rewords only the verses of the Bible that discuss homosexuality. The parties have since come to a settlement agreement.

ACLU Opposes Religious Freedom Protections

<http://www.bloombergtview.com/articles/2015-07-24/liberals-abandon-religious-liberty>

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has retracted its support of Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRAs), laws designed to prevent the government from oppressing religious people without a compelling justification. Reva Siegel and Douglas Nejaime published an article in the American Prospect magazine attempting to justify liberal groups' modern rejection of religious liberty. According to them, religious freedoms are only for minority religions with "unconventional" beliefs. If you are a Christian or have a divisive belief, you do not deserve protection under their theory.

"Protect Thy Neighbor" Campaign Aims to Force Religious Minorities into Compliance

<http://www.washingtonblade.com/2015/07/08/putting-the-religious-right-on-notice/>

Americans United for Separation of Church and State launched a "Protect Thy Neighbor" campaign, aimed at preventing states from protecting religious conscientious objectors. The campaign is designed to force religious dissenters into compliance. For instance, Americans United advocates for forcing pharmacists, business owners, and other people of faith who oppose abortion to fund or participate in distributing abortion-inducing drugs.

U.S. Senator Claims Individuals Do Not Have Religious Freedoms

<http://mediatrackers.org/wisconsin/2015/07/02/sen-baldwin-1st-amendment-doesnt-apply-individuals>

On national television, Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin stated that individuals and businesses do not have religious freedom and only institutions of faith are protected by the First Amendment. She said that she did not think the freedom to observe deeply held religious beliefs extended far beyond

churches, synagogues, and mosques. Her interpretation contradicts the vast majority of case law that the First Amendment applies to everyone, including individuals, businesses, and other organizations.

California Passes Bill Removing Religious Exemption for Vaccines

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/06/26/the-california-assembly-just-approved-one-of-nations-strictest-mandatory-vaccine-laws/>

California removed its religious exemption to receiving mandatory vaccines. Now, all California citizens must receive all required vaccines, even if they have a religious objection to some or all vaccines.

American Atheists, Inc. Sues to Remove Ten Commandments Monument from Florida Courthouse

<http://miami.cbslocal.com/2015/06/24/lawsuit-targets-ten-commandments-monument/>

American Atheists, Inc. filed a lawsuit to remove a Ten Commandments monument that stands outside a Levy County, Florida, courthouse.

Art Gallery Forced to Close Following Refusal to Host Same-Sex Weddings

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/06/22/gortz-haus-gallery-closes/29128889/>

The Gortz Haus art gallery in Grimes, Iowa, permanently closed after it was fined for refusing to host a same-sex wedding. The owners of the Gortz Haus, Dick and Betty Odgaard, stated that their Mennonite faith prohibited them from hosting the same-sex wedding. To avoid further fines, the Odgaards decided to stop hosting weddings at the Gortz Haus, which made the art gallery's survival financially untenable.

New York Towns Sued for Discriminating Against Hasidic Jews

<http://www.startribune.com/discrimination-lawsuit-against-new-york-village-can-proceed/306698111/>

The village of Bloomingburg and the Town of Mamakating, both in New York, blocked construction of housing and a bath used for ritual immersion and purification by Hasidic Jews. The developer filed a lawsuit against the two towns.

Michigan Sheriff's Office Forces Muslim Woman to Remove Headscarf in Front of Males

<http://www.wzzm13.com/story/news/2015/06/15/headscarf-removal/71271466/>
Fatme Dakroub, a Muslim woman whose faith requires her to wear a headscarf,

carf, was forced to remove her headscarf in front of three males after being arrested for driving on an expired license. Dakroub requested that her headscarf be removed only in front of a female officer, but the Oceana County Sheriff's Department refused.

Judge Stops Pittsylvania County, Virginia, Board of Supervisors Prayer Despite Supreme Court Ruling

http://www.roanoke.com/news/politics/judge-urbanski-rules-supervisors-prayers-remain-unconstitutional/article_414209f0-20fd-5b4e-bfae-aaa26e780a2b.html

The American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia sued the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors to stop them from opening meetings with a prayer. A federal district court judge held that the board of supervisors' prayers are unconstitutional despite the Supreme Court's opinion in *Town of Greece v. Galloway* holding that opening prayers are constitutional because the prayers in *Town of Greece* were given by volunteers from the community while the prayers before the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors were given by the supervisors themselves. Another Supreme Court opinion, however, *Marsh v. Chambers*, held that a legislative body like the board of supervisors could even hire a paid chaplain to give prayers.

Indiana Pizzeria Attacked for Supporting Traditional Marriage

<http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/christian-pizzeria-slammed-by-modern-day-fascists.html>

Memories Pizza in Walkerton, Indiana, was forced to close and its owner went into hiding after a local news station asked if the pizzeria would cater a same-sex wedding. The pizzeria had never been asked to cater a wedding before, but the owner, Kevin O'Connor, said that, because of his religious beliefs about marriage, he would have to refuse if he ever did receive a request to cater a same-sex wedding. The pizzeria has never turned away a customer because of the customer's sexual orientation. A high school softball coach in Concord, Indiana, was suspended after posting an arson threat against the pizzeria on Twitter.

San Antonio Police Cite Woman for Feeding the Homeless, Tell Her, "If You Want to Pray, Go to Church."

<http://www.texasobserver.org/feeding-homeless-religious-freedom-restoration-act/>

Joan Cheever operates a nonprofit ministry in San Antonio called The Chow Train that serves food to the homeless. San Antonio police issued Ms. Cheever,

herself a lawyer, with a citation for serving food without a permit, despite her informing them of the laws that protected her giving out meals. The police officers told Ms. Cheever, “Ma’am, if you want to pray, go to church.”

Governor Mocked for Praying to God

<http://thefederalist.com/2015/02/25/scott-walker-flap-shows-how-political-media-actively-loathe-christianity/>

After Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker noted that as a Christian he seeks God’s guidance and comfort through prayer, Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that Walker’s office provide copies of all correspondence between Walker and God. After the office responded that they did “not have records responsive to your request,” media journalists mocked Governor Walker by saying that the lack of written correspondence proves that “Walker has not communicated with God.”

FFRF Forces Dallas, Texas, to Remove Nativity Scene from Court Square

<http://www.gastongazette.com/20150211/new-owner-for-nativity-scene/302119920>

The Nativity scene on Dallas’ Court Square has been a tradition every Christmas for more than 30 years. But last year, the Freedom From Religious Foundation sent a letter demanding the town remove the display from public property or face possible legal action. Reluctantly, the city was removed the Nativity scene onto private property, despite overwhelming support and organized demonstrations to keep the religious display in the Court Square.

FFRF’s Attacks Do Not Prevail Over Ottawa County

<http://fox17online.com/2015/02/11/group-asks-ottawa-co-to-remove-religious-sign-from-hager-park/>

The Ottawa County Commission voted to reinstall a sign that displayed a Bible verse at a local park after it was removed by the Ottawa County Parks Commission a few months prior. The sign, which displayed Psalm 19:1, reads, “The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” It was originally taken down after the Michigan Association of Civil Rights Activists demanded it be removed and threatened legal action. After its reinstallation, Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter condemning the commissioner’s decision to display the sign, and the Ottawa County administrator responded the sign is not “as much about the Constitution or the Bible as much as community values.”

City in Texas Votes to Keep Prayer in City Council Meeting

<http://www.ktre.com/story/28133935/nacogdoches-citizens-fill-city-hall-prayer-stays-in-meetings>

For 25 years, the Nacogdoches City Council has traditionally opened all meetings with a non-denominational prayer. However, an objection was recently voiced and so the city met to discuss the issue with advice from Liberty Institute. “There was standing room only,” said one resident, in support of upholding the tradition of prayer before meetings. Nacogdoches residents not only brought signs and filled the city hall to capacity, but they also started a movement. The issue prompted many Nacogdoches churches and members to get together and commit to putting crosses in their yards, determined not to back down from their beliefs. When the mayor proposed including prayer as a written policy, not one person objected, and the crowd gave a standing ovation.

Congressional Prayer Caucus Attacked by Humanist Group

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2015-02-humanist-group-sends-letter-criticizing-congressiona>

In 2005, Congressman J. Randy Forbes gathered a small group from the U.S. House of Representatives who began meeting in Room 219 of the Capitol to pray for our nation. These Members later formed The Congressional Prayer Caucus—an official Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives—to formally acknowledge the important role that prayer plays in American life and our 200-year history, and to monitor and work to guard the right of individuals to pray. The Prayer Caucus has grown to a bipartisan group of 86 Members dedicated to protecting religious liberty. The American Humanist Association (AHA) seeks to destroy the group by urging Members of Congress not to join the Prayer Caucus. AHA has sent out at least two post-election letters to newly-elected Members claiming the group “discriminates against nonreligious Americans and regulates them to mere second-class citizens.”

FFRF Seeks to Remove a Nativity Scene Displayed for Years

<http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/3668107-constitutionality-park-nativity-scene-questioned>

Freedom From Religious Foundation (FFRF) is challenging the constitutionality of a Nativity scene long displayed on Wadena, Minnesota city property. Mayor George Deiss wholly supported the Nativity scene stating, “I believe we need it; I’m going to do whatever I can to make sure that it’s out there again.” Mayor Deiss said he has received feedback from residents who would like to see the city continue to display the scene. “This is small-town USA and

people here still have strong Christian values,” he said. “It was heartwarming for me the number of people who stopped me on the street and talked to me or called me or wrote letters to the editor about how supportive they were of still having a Nativity scene in the city of Wadena.” The Wadena City Council is set to meet to discuss how to respond to FFRF’s threatened lawsuit amid resounding support of the Nativity scene by residents.

Muslim College Students Tragically Killed by “Anti-Theist”

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/22352-ffrf-condemns-shooting-deaths-attributed-to-purported-atheist>

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/22/the-story-of-a-hate-crime>

On February 10, 2015, Craig Hicks turned himself in to police after shooting three Muslim college students in the head. Posts on Hicks’ Facebook page rail against religion, including quotes like “People say nothing can solve the Middle East problem. Not mediation, not arms, not financial aid. I say there is something. Atheism. –Jr Grover.” The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) was quick to release a statement that Craig Hicks was not a FFRF member after it was reported he “liked” FFRF’s Facebook posts.

FFRF Protests Bible in Arizona House Lounge

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/22324-ffrf-protests-open-bible-in-arizona-house-lounge>

Once the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) heard a Bible was placed in the Arizona House of Representatives’ lounge, they threatened the Speaker of the House, demanding the Bible be removed. They protested the “holy book” stating “Legislators should not take inspiration or counsel from the Bible. Reading this ponderous tome is unlikely to result in thought, let alone legislation, beneficial or acceptable to Arizonans,” and suggesting that legislators would be guided to “murder homosexuals.” Further, their ranting letter states “the [B]ible is full of nonsense,” and mocks Biblical stories and Christian beliefs as “blind faith.”

FFRF Attacks Proposal to Place “In God We Trust” on Courthouse

<http://www.gastongazette.com/20150205/commissioner-lets-put-in-god-we-trust-on-courthouse/302059919>

The Gaston County commissioners unanimously approved the proposal to place the phrase “In God We Trust” on the marquee of the courthouse. All the money to be used for the construction and installation was raised from private donations. Gaston County Commission Chairman Tracy Philbeck supported placement of the national motto on the courthouse, saying, “It honors our

heritage and history,” and “It’s about a demonstration of patriotism and an ideology the country was founded on,” and less about encouraging people to “believe a certain way.” The proposal survived attack by the Freedom From Religion Foundation, who stated that they “certainly oppose this action by the county government,” and believe it to be “unconstitutional.” However, federal courts have repeatedly upheld the motto’s use and the U.S. House of Representatives have even encouraged, by way of resolution, its display in schools and other public institutions.

Religious Objector Refused Internship Over Objection to Social Security Number

http://www.cleveland.com/court-justice/index.ssf/2015/01/federal_appeals_court_says_pot.html

Donald Yeager, an Austintown, Ohio, resident, refused to give his Social Security number to FirstEnergy in Shippingport, Pennsylvania, after he was accepted as the company’s student intern. The Christian Fundamentalist disavowed his Social Security number when he turned 18. He believes the number is a “mark of the beast,” a reference to a passage in the Book of Revelations. Yeager lost the internship because FirstEnergy would not process his application without a Social Security number. He sued the company, claiming the company violated state and federal laws by discriminating against him because of his religion. The case was dismissed after the Cincinnati-based appeals court pointed out that Yeager’s claim fails because “FirstEnergy’s collection of Yeager’s social security number is a ‘requirement imposed by law’ and therefore not an ‘employment requirement.’”

Arkansas Gun Range Bans Muslims

<http://www.opposingviews.com/i/religion/justice-department-monitor-arkansas-gun-range-banned-muslims>

The Gun Cave Shooting Range in Hot Spring, Arkansas, declared itself a “Muslim-free zone” and refuses to rent or sell guns to any person of the Muslim faith. The Department of Justice stated that it is “monitoring” the gun range.

Cross in Grand Haven, Michigan, Removed After Threat of Lawsuit

<http://nation.foxnews.com/2015/01/08/fifty-year-old-cross-be-removed-after-pressure-atheist>

A cross on top of Dewey Hill in Grand Haven, Michigan, was removed after fifty years to avoid a lawsuit from an activist. The Grand Haven City Council voted three-to-two to remove the cross.

Atlanta Fire Chief Fired for Religious Views

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/01/07/atlanta-fire-chief-fired-gay-comments-book/21378685/>

Atlanta fired its fire chief, Kelvin Cochran, because he wrote a book titled *Who Told You That You Were Naked?* that expressed Cochran's personal religious beliefs about homosexual conduct and same-sex marriage. Cochran filed a lawsuit against Atlanta for wrongful termination.

Washington, D.C., Curtails Religious Freedom Protections

<http://heritageaction.com/2015/01/protecting-religious-freedom-d-c/>

Washington, D.C., passed two bills that curtail religious liberty protections. One bill, the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act, forces even pro-life employers to cover elective, surgical abortions in their health plans. The other bill, the Human Rights Amendment Act, revokes a 1989 protection for religious schools' religious beliefs about "any homosexual act, lifestyle orientation, or belief." In order to prevent the D.C. laws from taking effect, both houses of Congress must pass a resolution of disapproval and the president must sign it. The U.S. House of Representatives voted to strike down the laws, but the U.S. Senate took no action on the bill.

Blue Ridge, Georgia, Walmart Demands Greeter Stop Saying, "Have a Blessed Day"

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/local/walmart-asks-greeter-stop-saying-have-blessed-day/njzWm/>

James Philips, a greeter at a Walmart in Blue Ridge, Georgia, greeted persons entering the store with the phrase, "Have a blessed day." Walmart, however, informed Philips that, as a Walmart employee, he could not use that phrase. Following Walmart's decision, a public outcry ensued, and Walmart reversed its decision, allowing Philips to say, "Have a blessed day."

IRS Agent Fired for Wearing Ceremonial Dagger to Work

http://taxprof.typepad.com/taxprof_blog/2014/11/former-irs-agent-settles-claim-.html

After being hired by the IRS, Kawaljeet Tagore was baptized into the Sikh religion and began wearing a small, blunted sword called a kirpan in accordance with the religion's requirements. However, the three-inch blade was half an inch longer than allowed under the "pocket knife exemption" for knives allowed in federal buildings. Tagore applied for a security waiver, but her application was denied. The IRS then fired Tagore when she continued to adhere to her religious requirement by wearing the kirpan. Tagore subse-

quently brought a lawsuit for the IRS's failure to accommodate her religion, but a Texas federal court ruled against her. Upon appeal, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit remanded the case back to the district court to assess whether Tagore's sincere religious beliefs prohibit her from wearing a kirpan that adhered to federal requirement. The dispute ended in a settlement between the former IRS worker and the U.S. government that expunges Tagore's firing from her record, allows her to enter federal buildings with the blade for a period of three years, and awards her lawyers \$400,000 for fees and expenses. However, Tagore will be barred from seeking re-employment with the IRS, but may seek work with other federal agencies.

Humanist Group Attacks Display of Student Artwork on Snowplows

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/11/01/student-artwork-on-citys-snowplows-poses-legal-questions/18352795/>

One town in South Dakota decided to feature student artwork on twenty-seven of their city snowplows, including two pieces of art that included religious themes. Siouxland Freethinkers, a group that calls itself a community of agnostics, atheists, humanists, and skeptics, immediately demanded that Sioux Falls take down the students' artwork on the snowplows. The city stood by the artwork display, but included a disclaimer stating, "Any messages or views expressed on the plows are not those of the city or endorsed by the city." Sioux Falls City Attorney David Pfeifle reiterated the city's commitment to keeping the artwork stating, the disclaimer "is sufficient to alleviate any Establishment Clause concerns. We're confident this will pass legal muster."

FFRF Urges Mayor to Cancel 46th Annual Community Prayer Breakfast

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/21752-ffrf-urges-mayor-to-cancel-city-sponsored-prayer-breakfast>

For 46 years, the City of New Albany, Indiana, has held a community prayer breakfast to "come together to celebrate the diversity within God's family." The event is an opportunity to unite citizens of all ages and faiths. Freedom From Religion Foundation called this prayer breakfast "a particularly egregious example of an inappropriate union between government and religion," but City Controller Linda Moeller defended the event, stating, "This is the 46th year; there's a lot of history and tradition behind this breakfast that we do every year. I've been on it for many years and during that time, there are no city funds that are attached to the breakfast. It's self-supporting and run off the ticket sales themselves."

County Offices Received Criticism for Closing on Good Friday

<http://ffrf.org/news/action/item/21746-ask-fayette-county-commission-to-end-good-friday-holiday>

A Fayette County Commission in La Grange, Texas, closed their offices in observance of Good Friday. Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) immediately sent letters stating that by closing its government office on Good Friday, the Texas county commission violated the Establishment Clause by promoting religion over non-religion. The Texas county attorney replied, "This is the culture that we live in, and most of our people would like to be off on that day." The county attorney invited anyone who has an issue with the county holidays policy to voice his or her concerns at a public hearing.

FFRF Attacks Orlando Police Chaplain

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/21726-ffrf-protests-many-police-chaplains-nationwide-including-in-orlando>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) attacked police, sheriff, and fire department chaplaincy programs in fifteen cities, opposing the use of chaplains to counsel employees, employees' families, victims of crimes, and assist with various other police activities, including death notifications. Cities and counties across the nation are launching new police chaplain programs. One department revived their police chaplain program, stating that they "wanted to bring faith into the organization to help officers and their families cope with the stress of the job." Orlando Police Chief John Mina emailed back the day after receiving FFRF's letter, saying, "I have no intention of discontinuing our Chaplain Program."

Humanist Group Attacks Police and Pastor Alliance Focused on Protecting City

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-11-police-and-pastors-cant-partner-in-city-sponsored-pr>

The Clergy and Police Alliance Program is a coalition dedicated to serving the citizens of Fort Worth, Texas. Their goal is to provide advice, support, and prayer during times of need. The program is not limited to particular religions; they seek to have a representation from every church, denomination, and faith from the City of Fort Worth. However, American Humanist Association warned that failure to terminate the program would result in a lawsuit against the city.

ALAC Legislation Restricts Religious Liberty

<http://blog.acton.org/archives/73790-anti-sharia-legislation-can-restrict-religious-liberty-christians.html>

Alabama passed a ballot measure that forbids courts, arbitrators, and administrative agencies from applying or “enforcing a foreign law if doing so would violate any state law or a right guaranteed by the Constitution of this state or of the United States.” Such “American Laws for American Courts” or ALAC statutes are often dubbed “anti-Sharia” statutes since preventing the encroachment of Sharia, the moral code and religious law of Islam, is usually their primary objective. “Anti-Sharia” laws cannot be written to oppose only Sharia because such measures would be religious discrimination, but opposing Sharia law is unnecessary since state law and the Constitution already trump foreign law. However, Muslim Americans who seek to use Sharia are not asking the American legal system to adopt Islamic rules of conduct, but rather to recognize the norms to which the litigants have already agreed to be bound. By pushing the idea that religious beliefs should be kept private, “anti-Sharia” laws become a threat to all of our religious beliefs.

City Bans 90-Year-Old from Feeding the Homeless

<http://dallasmorningviewsblog.dallasnews.com/2014/11/texas-faith-when-is-a-city-ban-on-feeding-the-poor-an-infringement-on-religious-liberty.html/>

A 90-year-old World War II veteran and two pastors have fed the homeless in a public park in South Florida. The 90-year-old founded an interfaith volunteer organization, “Love Thy Neighbor,” over 20 years ago to help the homeless. However, the City of Fort Lauderdale charged the benevolent 90-year-old with committing a crime due to the city’s desire to eliminate the homeless from their city limits. The City passed an ordinance restricting public feedings of the homeless in the city, making it virtually impossible for “Love Thy Neighbor” to operate as it has for decades.

Complaint Filed Against Videographer for Refusing to Video Same-Sex Wedding

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-videographer-faces-legal-action-after-refusing-to-work-lesbian-wedding-says-its-against-her-biblical-beliefs-135888/>

Courtney Schmackers, a wedding videographer in Bexley, Ohio, was asked to create a wedding video for a same-sex wedding. Schmackers refused to create the wedding video because of her religious beliefs that marriage is between one man and one woman. The couple who requested the video then filed a complaint against Schmackers with the Bexley Area Chamber

of Commerce. The chamber of commerce indicated that it would revise its membership policy to ban persons whose religious beliefs do not permit them to participate in same-sex weddings.

FFRF Threat Leads to Revised Holiday Display Policy

<http://walpole.wickedlocal.com/article/20140616/NEWS/140617061>

After the FFRF sent a letter to Walpole, Massachusetts, complaining about a Nativity scene on display at the Walpole Chamber of Commerce, Walpole Selectmen implemented a new holiday display policy that requires all displays to go through a selection process to make sure no displays either advance or inhibit religion, culture, or ethnicity.

Utah Police Officer Put on Paid Leave for Requesting to Not Lead Gay Parade

http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2014/06/09/salt_lake_city_police_officer_won_t_protect_gay_pride_parade.html

<http://christiannews.net/2014/06/11/suspended-police-officer-requested-to-be-reassigned-from-leading-gay-pride-parade/>

A police officer asked for a reassignment after he was told that he would have to lead a gay pride parade. The officer told his superiors that leading a gay pride parade would violate his religious beliefs. He asked if he could protect the parade in another capacity. He was put on paid leave and subject to investigation for refusing to lead the parade. A spokesperson for the police station said the officer must surrender personal beliefs when he assumes his role as an officer. The officer was forced to resign after the media falsely reported that he refused to attend the gay pride parade.

IRS Releases Donor Information for the National Organization for Marriage

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/06/pro-marriage-group-entitled-to-actual.html>

The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) is a nonprofit organization that defends traditional marriage and faith groups who uphold traditional marriage. The IRS released, without authorization, a Schedule B list of donors who donated more than \$5000 to the organization. The Huffington Post published the donor list that was supposed to be redacted from NOM's tax form. NOM was awarded actual damages.

Judges Banned from Sharing the Bible with Criminal Defendants

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/05/florida-judge-ordered-to-stop-offering.html>

http://www.mynews13.com/content/news/cfnews13/news/article.html/content/news/articles/cfn/2014/5/4/osceola_judge_bibles.html

A judge in Osceola County, Florida, was ordered to stop handing out Bibles to criminal defendants. An attorney complained after learning that the judge distributed Gideon Bibles to criminals.

Virginia County Board Told They Cannot Limit Prayers to Clergy

<https://www.au.org/media/press-releases/aclu-and-americans-united-say-va-county-board-may-not-permit-only-ministers>

The American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State wrote a letter to the Virginia County Board of Supervisors telling them that the board cannot choose only clergy members for opening prayers. Both groups acknowledged the recent ruling in *Town of Greece v. Galloway*; however, they object to the council using clergy members who mostly represent the Christian faith.

Two Brothers' TV Show Cancelled Because of Their Faith

<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2014/May/Benham-Twins-HGTV-Flap-Wont-Silence-Our-Faith/>

HGTV cancelled the show "Flip it Forward" after the TV station received complaints about David and Jason Benhams' Christian faith. The complaints came after People for the American Way posted David's comments affirming traditional marriage and the pro-life movement on their website, Right Wing Watch.

City Disallows Banners Advertising Christmas Musical

<http://aclj.org/free-speech-2/victory-for-religious-free-speech-in-texas>

A chapter of the Knights of Columbus in New Braunfels, Texas, obtained permission from the city to display a large banner advertising a musical entitled "Keep Christ in Christmas." However, when several citizens complained that the city's allowance of the banner "violated the separation of church and state," the city ordered the banners to be taken down and amended its policy to prohibit banners that advocated religious beliefs. With the help of a religious liberties group, the Knights of Columbus fought back against the discrimination, and the city agreed to reerect the banners.

Texas Department of Transportation Bans Private Ten Commandments Sign

<http://www.libertyinstitute.org/txdot?>

Jeanette Golden placed a sign displaying the Ten Commandments on her private property near Hemphill, Texas. When the Texas Department of Transportation (“TXDoT”) learned of the sign, however, they deemed it to be an illegal “outdoor advertising sign” and ordered it removed. After attorneys from Liberty Institute sent a demand letter to TXDoT on behalf of Ms. Golden, however, TXDoT rescinded their order, changed their rules on such signs, and agreed that the sign could remain on Ms. Golden’s property.

Residents Boycott Store Due to Owner’s Belief in Traditional Marriage

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2014/04/owners_anti-gay_views_cause_fu.html

Chauncy Childs, owner of Moreland Farmer’s Pantry in Sellwood, Oregon, posted commentary on her religious and political opposition to same-sex “marriage” on her personal Facebook page. When neighbors discovered the postings and publicized them, members of the local community called for a boycott of Child’s business.

FFRF Complains About Utility Company’s Observance of Good Friday

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20418-sun-prairie-utility-closes-illegally-for-good-friday-uses-crown-of-thorns-graphic>

Sun Prairie Utilities (SPU) in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, closed for Good Friday and announced its observance on its website with a banner that included a crown of thorns. The Freedom From Religion Foundation accused SPU of constitutional violations and demanded that SPU take the banner down and remain open. SPU removed the crown of thorns, but continued in its Good Friday observance.

ACLU Condemns Jewish Park

<http://www.nyclu.org/news/victory-park-hasidic-enclave-kiryas-joel-will-not-segregate-based-sex>

The Village of Kiryas Joel, New York, constructed a large public park for the community, which is comprised predominately of members of the Satmar Hasidic Jewish sect. In accordance with Satmar Hasidic Jewish religious principles, signs divided the park into areas that kept men and women separate. The ACLU heard about the segregation and demanded that the village redact any affiliation with or enforcement of the park signs. The village agreed to remove the signs and gave the ACLU permission to visit the park semiannually to check on compliance.

California Court Refuses Sikh Man for Jury Duty

<http://sacramento.cbslocal.com/2014/04/29/sikh-man-barred-from-sutter-county-courthouse-for-refusing-to-remove-religious-dagger/>

When Gursant Singh, a practicing Sikh, arrived at the Sutter County Courthouse in Yuba City, California, after being summoned for jury duty, authorities refused to let him into the courthouse due to his kirpan (a small, blunt dagger worn by Sikhs at all times under the requirements of Sikhism). Singh lamented the position of having to choose between breaking the law by not fulfilling his jury duty requirements or following his religion, but ultimately made it clear that he would suffer punishment rather than deny his religion.

Antireligion Organization Demands Removal of Religious Stickers from Post Office

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20790-ffrf-removes-%E2%80%9Csmile-god-loves-you%E2%80%9D-from-post-office-grounds-april-25-2014>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the manager of a U.S. Post Office in Cleveland, Ohio, complaining that a sticker reading “Smile! God Loves You” violated the First Amendment by showing a governmental preference for religion. The Post Office promptly removed the sticker.

Atheist Group Condemns “In God We Trust” License Plates

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18803-ffrf-kill-in-god-we-trust-license-plates>

<http://www.620wtmj.com/news/local/Appleton-Man-Hopes-for-In-God-We-Trust-License-Plates-in-Wisconsin-255569221.html>

When the Wisconsin legislature proposed a bill that would permit the issuance of specialty license plates bearing the words “In God We Trust” to help support veterans and police officers, the Freedom From Religion Foundation protested. Nonetheless, the legislature approved the bill.

Software Company CEO Pushed Out for Belief in Traditional Marriage

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/04/mozillas-gay-marriage-litmus-test-violates-liberal-values/360156/>

Brendan Eich, CEO and co-founder of Mozilla, resigned following an uproar over his political donation to California’s Proposition 8 (the California bill upholding traditional marriage between one man and one woman) became known.

Atheists Oppose Easter Displays Across America

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20370-ffrf-counters-wisconsin-capitol-easter-display>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20417-warren-mich-mayor-censors-ffrf-member%E2%80%99s-message-again>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20419-nonbelievers-counter-catholic-easter-display-in-daley-plaza>

Around the country, the Freedom From Religion Foundation and other anti-religion groups and individuals installed various displays that sought to undermine the religious story behind Easter.

Atheists Pressure Louisiana Representative over Bill Making the Bible the Official State Book

http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/04/louisiana_bible_state_book.html

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20364-ffrf-condemns-louisiana-bible-bill>

Louisiana Representative Thomas Carmody proposed making the Bible the official state book of Louisiana. However, atheist groups like the Freedom From Religion Foundation criticized the bill, and Carmody scrapped the plan before it could go to a vote.

Atheist Organization Bullies Small Town into Removing Crosses

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/04/17/group-protests-illegal-display-easter-crosses-in-ohio-village/>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20359-illegal-crosses-rise-again-for-easter>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that the tiny town of Stratton, Ohio, displayed crosses on the town municipal building, it threatened to sue the city for violating the Constitution. Mayor John Abdalla initially removed the crosses, but returned them during the Easter season.

Muslim Family Forced to Stop Praying at Empire State Building

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/03/muslim-couple-claims-discrimination.html>

A Muslim family was reprimanded for praying on the observation deck of the Empire State Building. A security guard escorted the family off the observation deck and out of the building. The family was praying in an area with little foot traffic. They believe that they were targeted for participating in Muslim prayer while wearing Muslim attire.

FFRF Decries Wisconsin Governor's Tweet of a Bible Reference

http://host.madison.com/ct/news/local/writers/jessica_vanegeren/freedom-from-religion-foundation-asks-scott-walker-to-remove-bible/article_f157ac50-aed5-11e3-b3ea-001a4bcf887a.html

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20275-ffrf-to-walker-delete-religious-tweet>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation reprimanded Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker for posting a reference to a Bible verse on Twitter. Walker's tweet read, "Philippians 4:13." The Governor did not quote the verse, which says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The FFRF claims that the words in the scripture Walker references make Walker sound like a threatening "theocratic dictator."

FFRF Complains About Police Chief's Prayer Walks

<https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20235-police-chief-uses-office-to-blatantly-promote-christianity>

Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a complaint letter and an open records request to Birmingham, Alabama, Police Chief A.C. Roper for leading monthly prayer walks in his community. Roper, who is also an ordained minister, prays for the safety and welfare of the community. The atheist group believes that Roper is using his government position to endorse religion.

FFRF Attacks City Council Prayers Made "In Jesus' Name"

<http://crossmap.christianpost.com/news/ohio-city-councilman-refuses-to-stop-presenting-prayers-in-jesus-name-9270>

Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the Cuyahoga Falls city council requesting that they stop praying before meetings. The city council had appointed Councilman Terry Mader as its chaplain. As Councilman Mader's religious beliefs required, he prayed "in Jesus' name." The atheist group claimed that the phrase "in Jesus' name" violates the United States Constitution.

American Humanist Association Fights Roadside Memorial to Killed Pedestrian

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-03-roadside-cross-in-lake-elsinore-ca-must-be-removed-s>

The American Humanist Association (AHA) sent a letter to Lake Elsinore, California, demanding that a roadside memorial in the shape of a cross be removed. The memorial was placed at the site of a fatal accident off of I-15 to commemorate the victim of the traffic accident. The AHA stated

that “religious symbols serving as memorials on government property are unconstitutional.” Lake Elsinore removed the memorial.

FFRF Opposes Kentucky Governor’s Support of Prayer Breakfast

<http://www.secularnewsdaily.com/2014/03/ffrf-mix-ham-eggs-not-state-church-2/>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation complained that Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear sent invitations to a prayer breakfast from his government email account and posted a link to the nondenominational prayer breakfast on his website. Governor Beshear was asked to cancel the prayer breakfast and remove any posts on the government website that could indicate government sponsorship of the citywide event.

Atheist Group Objects to Unpaid Police Chaplains

http://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/group-claims-la-crosse-police-chaplains-are-unconstitutional/article_e0751c0e-4c14-5bdd-886f-e4009cf6cca4.html

Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that La Crosse Police terminate its chaplaincy program in which religious persons volunteer their time to serve citizens during emergencies and to support law enforcement officials.

Saginaw City Council Attacked for Opening Meetings with Prayer

http://www.mlive.com/news/saginaw/index.ssf/2014/02/pre-meeting_prayers_by_saginaw.html

Saginaw City Council routinely issued a prayer before each meeting, but then Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter in opposition. Before receiving a demand letter, the Council had never received a complaint.

Atheist Group Attacks Prayer at Mayoral Inauguration

<http://freekeene.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Keene-NH.pdf>

Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter to Mayor Lane in Keene, New Hampshire, objecting to the invocation and benediction given during his inauguration ceremony. Describing prayer in public ceremonies “of dubious legality,” FFRF took issue with prayers given in this case by a reverend to solemnize the proceedings.

Religious Group Fights for a Booth at a Public Fair

<http://www.gazettextra.com/article/20140211/WC/140219947/1133>

Walworth County Fair refused to renew the application for a booth submitted by Peter’s Net, a Catholic education group. The group participated in the 2013 Walworth County Fair, following all directives and instructions. Peter’s Net objects to the fair’s discrimination in denying its application.

Department of Homeland Security's Naturalization Test Recognizes "Freedom of Worship" But Not "Freedom of Religion"

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/senator-rebukes-dhs-for-suggesting-freedom-of-religion-is-only-freedom-to-worship-140131/>

Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma asked the Department of Homeland Security(DHS) to change its naturalization test to promote "freedom of religion" instead of "freedom of worship." While the First Amendment protects freedom of religion—a stronger protection than mere freedom to worship—the DHS responded that it chose "freedom of worship" because that phrase is "more inclusive."

FFRF Attacks Religious References in Sherriff's Department's Facebook Page

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19880-ffrf-deletes-religious-postings-from-sheriff-department%E2%80%99s-facebook-page-january-2-2014>

The Douglas County Sheriff K-9 unit included some Christian themed posts on its Facebook page. After receiving a complaint from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the K-9 unit stopped writing religious posts.

Penitentiary Prohibits Jewish Inmates from Wearing Yarmulkes in Public

<https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/WDOC%20Kippah%20Letter%201-9-14.pdf>

The Wyoming State Penitentiary prohibited Mr. Fisher, an Orthodox Jew, from wearing his yarmulke while out of his cell if not at a religious service. The prison's policy allows inmates to wear their yarmulkes only in their cells or during religious services, in violation of Jewish religious practice.

Atheist Group Complains About Nativity Scene

http://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/local/hancock-council-of-churches-followed-protocol-in-displaying-nativity-scene/article_46eb2800-5c9b-11e3-aacb-0019bb30f31a.html

When the town council for Hancock, Maryland, approved the erection of a Nativity scene by the Hancock Council of Churches, the Freedom From Religion Foundation protested the display on Establishment Clause grounds. Town Manager David Smith insisted that the display was permissible, but agreed to post a sign disavowing any town association with the Nativity scene.

Hotel Security Guard Vandalizes Guests' Religious Objects

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/tnw/news/2013/DEC9Baker.html>

<http://forward.com/articles/194105/tenn-security-guard-gets-federal-sentence-for-defa/>

Justin Baker, a self-professed anti-Christian activist and security guard at

Doubletree Hotel in Jackson, Tennessee, discovered religious objects such as the Torah and various prayer books left in a meeting room by overnight guests for a worship ceremony the following morning. Baker spit on the Torah and defaced the books with profanity and phrases including “Hail Satan.” Baker was sentenced to five years in prison and required to pay \$9,999.99 in restitution damages.

Resident Sues Local County Over Opening Prayers

http://www.mlive.com/news/jackson/index.ssf/2013/12/jackson_county_will_not_back_d.html

Jackson County resident Peter Bormuth filed a lawsuit against the Jackson County Board of Commissioners due to the board’s tradition of opening prayers that included the closing phrase “in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.” The county refused to change its tradition, and the court held that the prayers do not violate the Establishment Clause.

North Carolina Groups Oppose School Grants for Low-Income Families

<http://www.reflector.com/node/2242447>

<http://www.wncn.com/story/24741381/nc-judge-hears-lawsuits-over-private-school-grants>

When the North Carolina legislature proposed a law that would give financial aid to low-income students wishing to attend private schools, the North Carolina Association of Educators and the North Carolina Justice Center attempted to block the financial aid by claiming that such action violated the state constitution. This case is ongoing.

Groups Seek to Undermine Oklahoma Ten Commandments Monument

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/other/satanists-want-statue-beside-ten-commandments-monument-oklahoma-legislature-f2D11712595>

<http://rajanzed.com/rajan/index.php/2013/12/10/hindus-interested-in-erecting-lord-hanuman-statue-in-oklahoma-capitol-grounds/>

Various groups, including Satanists and Hindus, sought permission to erect displays next to the Ten Commandments monument on the State Capital grounds. The State has ordered a moratorium until the lawsuit regarding the Ten Commandments monument is resolved.

Antireligion Advocates Ridicule Christmas Displays

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2013-12-09/news/os-festivus-florida-capitol-20131209_1_festivus-pole-chaz-stevens-nativity-scene

When the Florida Prayer Network (FPN) obtained permission to erect a Nativity scene in the Florida Capital, various antireligion groups and individu-



als pitched in to mock FPN, constructing displays right beside the Nativity scene such as a six-foot tall “Festivus” pole made from empty beer cans and a banner reading: “At this season of the Winter Solstice, we celebrate the Birth of the Unconquered Sun—the TRUE reason for the season.”

Utah Attorney General Orders Issuance of Same-Sex “Marriage” Licenses Regardless of Religious Beliefs

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/57306295-78/county-sex-marriage-office.html.csp>

After a federal district court legalized same-sex “marriage” in Utah, several clerks refused to administer the licenses due to religious beliefs. The Utah Attorney General consequently issued a statement that anyone refusing to administer the licenses would be held in contempt of court.

California Citizen Sues to Stop City Council Prayers

http://www.times-standard.com/breakingnews/ci_24818317/prayer-city-judge-narrowly-rules-eurekas-favor

Carole Beaton, a citizen of Eureka, California, brought a broad claim against the city for the city council’s regular opening of their meetings with prayer by a paid chaplain and the annual Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast. In her lawsuit, Beaton attempted to silence any type prayer whatsoever. A California state court held that the city’s prayer practice was permitted, but indicated that Beaton could have successfully challenged the practices if she had narrowed her complaint.

Employees Fired for Refusing to Follow Scientology Mandates

<http://eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/12-23-13a.cfm>

Dynamic Medical Services (DMS), a medical services company in Miami, Florida, ordered several employees to spend half of their workdays attending Scientology courses that involved practices such as staring at someone for eight hours without moving or screaming at inanimate objects. When the employees repeatedly requested exemptions from the classes and ultimately refused to continue attending, they were terminated. The employees filed a lawsuit for the discrimination, and DMS paid the employees \$170,000 in settlement.

Restaurant Fires Employee for Religious Observance

http://www.laurinburgexchange.com/news/home_top-news/2550429/Suit-brought-against-Scottish-Foods

<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/12-23-13.cfm>

Sheila Silver is a devout Pentecostal woman who wore skirts instead of

pants to work in accordance with her religious beliefs. After another company acquired her restaurant, the new owners commanded her to conform to their dress code by wearing pants. When Silver insisted on following her religious convictions, she was fired. The EEOC subsequently brought a lawsuit on Silver's behalf, and the new owners agreed to settle the suit by paying Silver \$40,000.

California McDonald's Fires Employee for Religious Beliefs

<http://eEOC.gov/eEOC/newsroom/release/12-20-13a.cfm>

McDonald's Restaurants of California, Inc. refused to allow a Muslim crew trainer to grow a beard in adherence to his religion. When the employee refused to compromise on his religious beliefs, he was fired. The employee filed a complaint against the discrimination, and the restaurant agreed to settle by paying the employee \$50,000.

"Duck Dynasty" TV Star Suspended for Religious Beliefs

<http://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/2013/12/18/phil-robertson-suspended-after-comments-about-homosexuality/>

<http://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/2013/12/28/duck-dynasty-to-resume-filming-with-phil-robertson-ae-announces/>

When Phil Robertson of A&E's "Duck Dynasty" stated that he believed that homosexuality was a sin due to his religious beliefs, A&E suspended him from the show. After a massive national controversy ensued, the network reinstated Robertson and continued the show as before.

Activists Pressure Comedian into Canceling Performance for Catholic Group

<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=20035>

Comedian Bob Newhart was scheduled to perform for Legatus, an organization of Catholic businessmen, but backed out under pressure from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination who denounced Legatus as a "rabid anti-LGBT organization."

Atheist Group Demands the Removal of Nativity Scene from City Hall

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/12/12/officials-refuse-to-back-down-in-battle-with-atheists-over-florida-citys-nativity-scene/#>

When the City of Chipley, Florida, erected their annual Nativity scene display in the city hall, a local reporter contacted the Freedom From Religion Foundation. The FFRF wrote a demand letter to the city council, claiming that the display violated the Constitution and demanding its elimination.

City officials refused to remove the Nativity scene but added a decorated Christmas tree in an attempt to balance the display with a secular symbol.

County Officials Block Business Owner from Building Chapel on Private Land

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/legal-courts/2013/12/06/vineyards-private-chapel-focus-of-legal-dispute-in-calif#.USCCoi-Qydw>

Reverge Anselmo, owner of Seven Hills Land and Cattle Company in Shasta County, California, built a private chapel on part of his land for use by friends and family. However, officials from Shasta County issued a “Red Tag Stop Order” prohibiting Anselmo from using the chapel.

Police Drag Pro-Life Advocates to Court for Sidewalk Ministry

<https://www.thomasmoresociety.org/2013/12/06/breaking-news-cases-dismissed-and-pro-lifers-first-amendment-rights-protected/>

Brian Westbrook, executive director of Coalition for Life, and Rita Sparrow, veteran sidewalk counselor, peacefully protested outside of a local Planned Parenthood location in St. Louis, Missouri, on a regular basis. Westbrook maintained a sign offering free pregnancy testing and ultrasounds, while Sparrow sat in her chair and spoke with individuals. Without warning, St. Louis police charged Westbrook with false advertising because he was not personally giving the pregnancy tests but was instead referring patrons to the ultrasound van across the street. Additionally, Sparrow was accused of littering with her lawn chair. Judge Michael Noble of the St. Louis Circuit Court threw the charges out, protecting Westbrook and Sparrow’s First Amendment rights.

Senior Center Told to Quit Praying Before Meals

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19742-ffrf-removes-prayers-before-meals-at-south-carolina-senior-center-december-5-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the Simpsonville Activity and Senior Center in Simpsonville, South Carolina, demanding the discontinuation of praying before meals. Director of Recreation Robbie Davis confirmed that “staff at the Simpsonville Senior Center has ceased leading or encouraging prayer before meal functions.”

Police Officer Rebuked for Recommending Local Churches

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19882-ffrf-ends-religious-promotion-by-police-december-4-2013>

In Toledo, Ohio, the course of a conversation between a citizen and a police officer brought up the topic of churches, and the officer recommended sev-

eral local churches to the citizen. The citizen complained to the Freedom From Religion Foundation, who complained to the Toledo Police Department. The Chief of Police confirmed that the officer's supervisor would be told to counsel the officer about his actions.

FFRF Ends Church Discount at New Jersey Restaurant

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19743-new-jersey-restaurant-retracts-exclusive-discount-december-2-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that Aleathea's Restaurant in Cape May, New Jersey, offered a discount to churchgoers, it wrote a letter demanding the elimination of the practice. The restaurant cancelled its discount.

Atheist Group Calls for Shoppers to Boycott Hobby Lobby

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/19500-ffrf-calls-for-hobby-lobby-boycott>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation called for a complete boycott of Hobby Lobby due to the company owners' stand for their religious beliefs regarding the Obamacare contraceptive mandate.

Atheist Group Condemns Local Police Chief's Christian Affirmations

<http://christiannews.net/2013/11/26/georgia-police-chief-moves-christian-posts-to-personal-page-following-pressure-from-atheists/>

Gary Jones, a police chief in Harlem, Georgia, posted a myriad of messages on the Harlem Public Safety Department Facebook page that included alerts, encouragement, criminal updates, and parenting tips from a Christian perspective. The Freedom From Religion Foundation found out about the Christian nature of some of Jones's posts and immediately sent a demand letter to the department to bring a halt to Jones's messages. Jones eventually submitted and created a separate personal page to continue his posts.

President Obama Omits "Under God" from Public Reading of Gettysburg Address

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/11/was-president-obama-right-to-omit-under.html>

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, President Obama was scheduled to recreate President Lincoln's famous speech. However, the President declined to visit the official site, opting instead to record a reading of the address that conspicuously left out the words "under God."

U.S. Senate Passes Bill Attacking Religious Liberty

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/11/us-senate-passes-bill-attacking.html>

The U.S. Senate approved and passed on to the House of Representatives the “Employment Non-Discrimination Act” (ENDA), which would affect hiring and firing laws as well as workplace codes of conduct. The ENDA would discriminate against those who believe that homosexual and transgender behavior is wrong based on religious grounds.

Atheist Group Sues California City for Prayers at City Council Meetings

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/19100-ffrf-sues-over-prayers-chaplain-in-pismo-beach-calif>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a lawsuit against the city of Pismo Beach, California, complaining that the appointment of a city chaplain who prayed to the Christian God and led the vast majority of opening prayers at city council meetings was unconstitutional. The city agreed to pay over \$47,000 in nominal damages and attorneys’ fees, eradicate the practice of praying at meetings, and eliminate the chaplain position.

Shipping Company Suppresses Employee Prayer

<http://www.wcpo.com/news/region-northern-kentucky/cair-cincinnati-to-announce-complaint-against-dhl-for-firing-24-nky-muslim-workers-over-prayers>

After a DHL Express branch in Kentucky realized that some of its Muslim employees were using their flexible fifteen-minute break periods for prayer, the facility eliminated the breaks. When several employees attempted to continue conducting their prayers outside of formal break times, DHL fired them, even though other employees were allowed to take nonscheduled breaks for activities such as smoking. The employees have filed a complaint with the EEOC for DHL’s discrimination.

National Bank Closes Muslims’ Bank Accounts

<http://dearborn.patch.com/groups/politics-and-elections/p/civil-rights-lawsuit-alleges-huntington-national-bank-discriminates-against-arab-americans>

<http://dawudwalid.wordpress.com/2013/11/22/civil-rights-advocacy-group-says-banks-closed-more-accounts-of-muslims/>

Without explanation, Huntington National Bank suddenly began closing numerous personal and business bank accounts that belonged to individuals who were Muslim or of Arabian descent. After receiving numerous reports of such closures, the Arab-American Civil Rights League launched an investigation and assisted in filing a lawsuit against the arcane discriminatory treatment. The group has also requested the Office of the Comptroller of

the Currency and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to investigate similar closures of JPMorgan Chase Muslim customers.

Wholesale Giant Labels Bibles as “Fiction”

<http://townhall.com/columnists/toddstarnes/2013/11/19/why-did-costco-label-bible-as-fiction-n1749324>

A Costco Wholesale store in Simi Valley placed Bibles in the fiction book section. When confronted, Costco management blamed placement on human warehouse error.

Atheist Scares City into Withdrawing Funding for Annual Christmas Celebration

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/11/18/christmas-was-nearly-canceled-in-this-small-town-after-an-atheist-activists-threat-but-heres-how-people-rallied-to-save-an-annual-celebration/>

After an atheist complained to city officials in Spencerport, New York, about the annual holiday celebration, “Christmas on the Canal,” which included carols, tree lighting, a Nativity scene, and other festivities, the town told event founder and organizer Elaine Spaziano to remove religious references and secularize the event. When Spaziano refused, the town pulled its sponsorship. However, the community rose up in support of the event and provided the necessary funding to continue the annual celebration.

New Mexico Hotel Fires Muslim Employee for Following Religious Practices

<http://eoc.gov/eoc/newsroom/release/11-18-13.cfm>

Safia Abdullah, a practicing Muslim, was hired for a housekeeping position by MCM Elegante Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. However, Abdullah’s supervisor refused to allow her to work unless she removed her hijab. When Abdullah insisted on following her religion by not removing her hijab, she was fired. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on Abdullah’s behalf, and the hotel settled the claim.

ACLU Demands That Catholic Hospital Advise Abortions

<http://durangoherald.com/article/20131113/NEWS01/131119849/-1/News01/ACLU:-Mercy-anti-abortion-policy-illegal->

After Mercy Regional Medical Center cardiologist Dr. Michael Demos advised a woman to consider abortion due to a possible medical condition, the Catholic hospital’s chief medical officer instructed Demos not to recommend abortions in order to uphold the hospital’s religious, pro-life stance. The ACLU found out about the issue and demanded that the state Department of Public Health and Environment investigate and end the hospital’s policy.

Atheist Group Fights Church Discount at Texas Restaurant

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19292-ffrf-stops-illegal-church-discount-november-8-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that Luna's Friendswood, a Mexican food franchise in Texas, offered a ten percent discount to diners with church bulletins, it threatened the restaurant with a demand letter that called for the discontinuation of the discount. The restaurant owners bowed to the FFRF's demands and stopped the discount.

UPS Fires Jehovah's Witness for Attending Religious Service

<http://eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/12-3-12a.cfm>

<http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/11-4-13.cfm>

UPS refused to accommodate a request to adjust the start date of a newly hired employee so that he could attend an annual religious service as part of his beliefs as a Jehovah's Witness. UPS fired him after he chose to attend the religious service rather than violate his religious beliefs. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on his behalf, and the UPS agreed to pay \$70,000 in a settlement.

Minnesota Attorney Attacks Judges with Anti-Religious Slurs

http://www.twincities.com/crime/ci_24613398/hastings-lawyer-suspended-religious-slurs

Rebekah Nett, an attorney based in Hastings, Minnesota, lashed out at several federal bankruptcy judges in her filings before the court. Nett described the judges with slurs such as "black-robed bigot" and "Catholic Knight Witch Hunter." Nett was suspended indefinitely for her harassment and discriminatory statements.

Muslim Security Guard Fired for Refusing to Shave His Beard

http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2021994205_beardlawsuitxml.html

American Patriot Security (APS) hired Abdulkadir Omar, a practicing Muslim, as a security guard in 2009. One day, the APS regional manager, citing the company's grooming policy, commanded Omar to shave his closely cropped beard, even though Omar had never before been told that his beard was not allowed. Omar repeatedly requested a religious exception due to the fact that his religious beliefs required him to have a beard. Nonetheless, APS fired Omar for his desire to honor his religion. Omar then filed a lawsuit against APS for its discriminatory actions, and the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington awarded Omar with over \$66,000 in back pay.

Atheist Group Pressures Police Department into Forgoing Prayer for the City

<http://www.wlwt.com/news/local-news/cincinnati/police-forced-to-withdraw-from-prayer-walks-after-lawsuit-threat/22775768>

In Cincinnati, Ohio, local faith leaders joined with members of the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) to combat violence by making regular prayer walks around the city. The Freedom From Religion Foundation found out about the initiative and promptly sent a letter threatening a lawsuit unless the CPD ended their involvement with the prayer walks. Although the CPD initially wanted to find a way to continue their participation, the organizers agreed that a lawsuit should be avoided, and the CPD consequently withdrew from the group.

Prayer at Luncheon at Atlanta Airport Draws Rebuke

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19137-ffrf-grounds-prayer-at-atlanta-airport>

An employee and customer satisfaction luncheon at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport was opened with Bible verses and prayer. When an attendee complained to the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the FFRF wrote a demand letter to the airport with charges of constitutional violations. The airport responded that it took notice of the FFRF's objection and would "abide by all applicable law" in the future.

Department Head Criticized for Providing Devotionals to President Obama

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/publicly-funded-presidential-prayers-former-faith-based-office-director>

Joshua Dubois, former head of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, provided regularly emailed morning devotionals to President Obama during his tenure. Even though Dubois composed the messages while off the clock, Americans United for Separation of Church and State condemned Dubois's actions as an inappropriate use of government time and money, as well as an unfit catering to President Obama's religious interests.

Atheist Group Threatens Lawsuit over Police Chaplains Unit

http://blog.al.com/montgomery/2013/10/atheist_group_says_montgomery.html#incart_m-rpt-2

<http://www.wsfa.com/story/23780685/montgomery-responds-to-atheist-organizations-demand-it-end-operation-good-shepherd>

The Montgomery Police Department in Montgomery, Alabama, has a program called Operation Good Shepherd that dispatches trained clergy to

violent crime scenes to help comfort the victims. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and American Atheists Inc. (AAI) threatened to sue the city unless Operation Good Shepherd was disbanded or expanded to somehow include atheists. Montgomery City Attorney Kimberly Fehl refused to succumb to the threats and instead informed the FFRF and AAI that Operation Good Shepherd would continue.

Mennonite Couple Threatened for Refusing to Host Same-Sex “Marriages”

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/mennonite-couple-refuses-to-host-same-sex-wedding-files-lawsuit-against-iowa-civil-rights-commission-106308/>

Richard and Betty Odgaard, a Mennonite couple from Iowa, own Gortz Haus Gallery, a former church that was transformed into an art gallery. When the Odgaards refused to host a same-sex “marriage” at the Gallery due to their religious beliefs, a claim for discrimination was filed before the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC). The Odgaards refused to stand for the discrimination against their own beliefs, and responded by filing a lawsuit in the Polk County District Court to enjoin the punitive action levied by the ICRC.

California Train Refuses Transportation to Sikh Student

<http://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/sikh-student-barred-from-bus-over-religious-artifact/>

Harsimran Singh, a UC Davis student and a Sikh from Davis, California, attempted to board a local Amtrak for transportation as he had for the past two years. The driver, noticing Singh's kirpan (a small, blunt dagger worn by Sikhs at all times under the requirements of Sikhism), called the police and refused to allow Singh to board the bus. Singh refused to violate his religious beliefs by removing his kirpan, and was consequently barred from the bus.

Restaurant Supervisors Heap Anti-Semitic Harassment on Jewish Deliveryman

<http://nypost.com/2013/10/28/anti-jewish-jokes-about-nazi-death-gas-chambers-900k/>

For sixteen years, Adam Wiercinski, a Jew with close family ties to the Holocaust, delivered food to Mangia 57, a midtown New York restaurant. During that time, Wiercinski's supervisors subjected him to continual persecution because of his Jewish heritage, joking about Nazi gas chambers and referring to him as a “dirty Jew.” Wiercinski finally filed a lawsuit to stop the harassment, and the jury levied a judgment of \$900,000 against the restaurant.

Missouri Governor Vetoes Proposed Law Protecting Christmas

http://www.stljewishlight.com/news/local/article_da3ab208-3205-11e3-aa21-001a4bcf887a.html

After the Missouri legislature passed a bill that would prohibit government facilities from banning or restricting the observance of federal holidays (including Christmas), Missouri Governor Jay Nixon vetoed the bill, citing safety concerns. State legislators overwhelmingly voted to override the governor's veto, however, and the bill was passed into law.

Washington State Court Judge Disciplined for Refusing to Perform Same-Sex Weddings

<http://www.theolympian.com/2013/10/05/2759870/state-admonishes-judge-over-wedding.html>

<http://www.cjc.state.wa.us/Case%20Material/2013/7251%20Tabor%20Stip%20FINAL.pdf>

Thurston County Superior Court Judge Gary Tabor publicly stated that he would not perform same-sex weddings in his judicial capacity due to his philosophical and religious convictions. In response, the Washington Judicial Conduct Commission levied a sanction against Judge Tabor for violating sexual orientation discrimination laws and required him to choose between violating his religious beliefs by performing same-sex “marriages” in addition to traditional marriages, or abstaining from performing marriages at all. Judge Tabor opted to cease performing marriage ceremonies entirely under the illusory choice.

City Council Member Criticized for Organizing Weekend Prayer Vigil

<http://wtvr.com/2013/10/02/aclu-eyes-district-wide-prayer-event-at-richmond-schools/>

<http://acluva.org/14059/aclu-of-virginia-seeks-information-about-upcoming-prayer-events-in-forty-five-richmond-public-school-buildings-urges-compliance-with-the-constitution/>

Michelle Mosby, a city council member for Richland, Virginia, was concerned for the safety of children in the wake of growing violence in schools. Consequently, she organized a community hour of prayer on a Saturday at all Richmond public schools. However, the Richmond ACLU launched an inquiry when it heard of the event and condemned Mosby's identification as a city council member affiliated with prayer and her use of work printers for producing event flyers. Mosby ignored the backlash and carried out the event as planned.

Atheist Organization Targets Religious Contract Workers

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18310-us-postal-service-trucks-no-place-for-religious-imagery>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a demand letter to the U.S. Postal Service requesting a ban on religious symbols on contract workers' personal vehicles.

Mississippi Judge Ejects Sikh from Courtroom for Wearing a Turban

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/27/judge-rimes-sikh-slur-remove-that-rag_n_3998852.html

Jagjeet Singh, a practicing Sikh, was pulled over for a flat tire, harassed by Mississippi Department of Transportation officers, and ultimately arrested for refusing to relinquish his kirpan (a small ceremonial knife that is a mandatory religious article for Sikhs). Once taken to court, Judge Aubrey Rimes of the Pike County Justice Court ejected Singh from the court due to Singh's turban, which Judge Rimes publicly referred to as "that rag." The Department of Justice intervened with an investigation and prompted amendments to the Pike County nondiscrimination policy to protect religious freedom in the future.

Car Dealership Fires Employee for Honoring Sabbath

<http://www.sacbee.com/2013/09/27/5775664/maita-chevrolet-pays-to-settle.html>

Anthony Okan, a Seventh-day Adventist, was a salesman for Maita Chevrolet in El Grove, California. Mr. Okan notified Maita Chevrolet of his religious beliefs against working from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday. Maita Chevrolet nevertheless repeatedly scheduled Mr. Okan to work during those times. Maita Chevrolet harassed, disciplined, and fired Mr. Okan when he continued to honor his Sabbath. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on Mr. Okan's behalf, and the car dealership settled by agreeing to pay Mr. Okan \$158,000, revise its policy manual, and train its personnel on their legal obligations regarding religious freedoms.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Opposes Jewish Holiday Observance

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18762-new-york-sukkahs-need-to-stop-obstructing-pedestrians>

Every year, practicing Jews place small, temporary booths outside of their homes in which they eat their meals as part of the celebration of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. The Freedom From Religion Foundation specifically targeted observant Jews from Brooklyn, New York, by complaining to the city's

Department of Sanitation Bureau of Legal Affairs that the booths should be banned. Additionally, the FFRF called on other New York citizens to follow suit.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Demands Abolition of Cross from City Seal

<http://www.idsnews.com/news/story.aspx?id=94285>

Ellettsville, Indiana, has a city seal featuring symbols representing key features of the community: knowledge, industry, unity, and God. When the FFRF discovered the city seal's inclusion of a cross and the words "In God We Trust," they sent a demand letter to the town council that denounced the seal as an unconstitutional violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The city council stated that the seal would remain unchanged unless a lawsuit is filed against the town.

Florida Business Attacked for Requiring Accurate Advertising for Anti-Christian Documentary

<http://aclj.org/equal-access/victory-for-liberty-defeat-anti-christian-activists>

A private business owner in Florida who provided facilities for homeschoolers and community events was approached by a patron who wanted to show a documentary at the business owner's facilities entitled, "Caesar's Messiah: The Roman Conspiracy to Invent Jesus." However, the patron wanted to advertise the film on the business owner's website under the title, "Caesar's Messiah Documentary (History of Christianity)." The business owner refused to post the misleading title and instead required accurate advertising. After the showing, the patron filed a discrimination complaint with the Florida Commission on Human Rights (FCHR) against the business owner for his insistence on honesty. After a religious liberties group stepped in to defend the business owner, the FCHR quickly dismissed the complaint.

Ten Commandments Monument Vandalized in Washington, D.C.

<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/09/23/10-Commandments-monument-toppled-in-Washington>

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/oct/29/toppled-ten-commandments-back-in-place-near-suprem/>

Faith and Action, a Christian outreach ministry in Washington, D.C., installed a monument of the Ten Commandments on their property, which is behind the U.S. Supreme Court. The monument was situated so that it was visible to the Supreme Court justices as they entered and exited the courthouse. One morning, Reverend Robert Schenck arrived at the Faith and Action building to find the monument pushed facedown into the dirt; the metal pole supporting

the monument had been bent into a 90-degree angle to the ground. Faith and Action repaired the monument and vowed to never yield to persecution.

Sikh College Professor Beaten for His Religion

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/22/prabhjot-singh-sikh-columbia-hate-crime_n_3972449.html

Dr. Prabhjot Singh, a Columbia University professor and a practicing Sikh, was attacked by a group of men who believed him to be a Muslim due to his beard and turban. Singh was knocked to the ground and beaten while the men shouted anti-Muslim statements at him.

Atheist Group Calls for Dismemberment of Police Chaplain's Unit

<http://www.kob.com/article/stories/S3148086.shtml?cat=500>

The Albuquerque Police Department in New Mexico maintains a chaplain's unit, which is mainly composed of volunteers who pray with and counsel police officers and families that are experiencing trauma due to horrific accidents or crimes. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter to the mayor calling the chaplain's group "callous" because it doesn't address atheists and requesting the unit's dissolution.

Religious Statues Decapitated in New Jersey

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2013/09/19/religious-statues-decapitated-outside-church-in-gloucester-county/>

Nine statues belonging to St. Mary's Malaga in New Jersey were defaced, including the decapitation of statues of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Local police are investigating the vandalism and considering upgrading the charges to a hate crime.

College Threatens to Expel Student for Observance of Religious Holiday

http://blogs.dallasobserver.com/unfairpark/2013/09/an_orthodox_jew_says_el_centro.php

Hillel Rodin is an Orthodox Jew from Dallas, Texas, who attends nursing school at El Centro Community College. On Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year and one of the holiest days in Judaism, Rodin is prohibited from working, driving, writing, touching money, or using electricity due to his religious beliefs. When Rodin found out that classes would be conducted on Rosh Hashanah, he requested an exception from attending and offered to participate in make-up classes. The school refused to accommodate Rodin's requests and threatened to expel Mr. Rodin if he missed class or was more than fifteen minutes late. However, after Rodin filed a lawsuit, the school

discontinued their religious discrimination and agreed to allow Rodin to make up missed classes at a later date.

Muslim Groups Call for Disciplinary Action Against County Employee for Criticism of Islam

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/09/14/county-employee-faces-discipline-for-post-critical-of-islam-he-made-on-his-private-facebook-page/>

John Jamason, a county public affairs staffer for Palm Beach County in Florida, posted a message criticizing Islam on his personal Facebook page. Word spread about the post, and Islamic advocates called for disciplinary action against Jamason. After an investigation, the county decided against punishing Jamason.

Man Attempts to Gun Down Christians for Their Beliefs

<http://www.lifenews.com/2013/09/11/man-who-shot-up-pro-life-office-wanted-to-kill-conservative-right-wing-christians/>

<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/09/19/Convicted-Gay-Marriage-Domestic-Terrorist-Sentences-to-25-Years-in-Prison>

Floyd Lee Corkins entered the office of the Family Research Counsel with a semi-automatic pistol and one-hundred rounds of ammunition and began firing on employees before the building manager and police apprehended him. Corkins later verified that he wanted to kill “conservative right-wing Christians.” Corkin was sentenced to twenty-five years in federal prison.

College Football Commentator Fired for Belief in Biblical Marriage

<http://www.libertyinstitute.org/pages/issues/in-the-public-arena/liberty-institute-confronts-major-network-after-sportscaster-is-fired-for-his-faith>

Craig James, a former college and NFL player, was hired by Fox Sports Southwest to join their sports broadcasting team. After one appearance on the air, Fox Sports Southwest fired Craig James. A Fox spokesperson told the Dallas Morning News that James was fired because of his religious convictions that marriage should be between one man and one woman. James had not discussed his views about marriage on the air but two years prior after being asked about his views during a campaign for the U.S. Senate. James retained Liberty Institute as counsel to help him fight back against the discriminatory termination.

City Refuses to Accommodate Messianic Jewish Woman

http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2013/09/messianic_jewish_woman_wins_ba.html

The City of Birmingham, Alabama, required Renee Gunn, a Messianic Jew, to work on her Sabbath, which is from sundown Friday until sundown Sat-

urday. After the city refused to accommodate her request for an exemption, Ms. Gunn resigned from her position in order to observe her Sabbath. Ms. Gunn then filed a lawsuit. The city agreed to settle the religious discrimination claim by rehiring Ms. Gunn and paying her \$80,000 in back pay and compensatory damages.

Anti-Religion Group Opposes State Bill that Safeguards Religious Freedom

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18615-quash-orwellian-%E2%80%9Creligious-freedom-amendment%E2%80%9D-in-wis-legislature>

The Wisconsin legislature introduced an amendment to the state constitution consistent with Supreme Court precedent that protects religious liberty and the right of conscience for all citizens. The Freedom From Religion Foundation labeled the proposal “Orwellian” and called for its rejection.

Group Demands the Removal of Cross from City Seal

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/article/20130903/NEWS/130909828?p=1&tc=pg>

Americans United for Separation of Church and State wrote a letter to Mayor Bob Apgar of DeLand, Florida, demanding that the city remove a cross from the 131-year-old city seal. The town refused to bow to the request, and the city’s attorney wrote a reply letter outlining the constitutionality of the seal.

Mayor Eradicates Cross from City Seal

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18824-ffrf-complaint-removed-latin-cross-seal-from-public-building-august-30-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that the city seal of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, contained a Latin-style cross, it called on Mayor Kathleen Ehley to purge the cross from the seal. Mayor Ehley assured the FFRF that they were in the process of replacing the seals, and that the versions displaying the cross were almost extinct.

Atheist Group Threatens Lawsuit over 9/11 Memorial

<http://aclj.org/us-constitution/jay-sekulow-princeton-nj-must-not-let-atheists-derail-9-11-memorial-cross>

Roy James, the Deputy Fire Chief in Princeton, New Jersey, acquired an iron beam from the ruins of the World Trade Center and proposed using the beam as a 9/11 memorial. When the American Atheists (AA) learned that a cross had been cut into one side of the beam, they called the memorial “grossly offensive” and threatened to sue the city if the memorial were approved.

Atheist Group Pressures County Chairman to Eliminate Religious References

<http://whnt.com/2013/08/26/exclusive-atheist-group-calls-for-elimination-of-prayer-at-madison-county-commission/>

Dale Strong, the Madison County Chairman in Huntsville, Alabama, opened commission meetings with prayer and included a reference to Joshua 1:9 in his official public biography. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote multiple letters to Strong insisting that he eliminate the opening prayers and remove the Bible verse from his biography. FFRF called the prayers “unnecessary, inappropriate and divisive” and stated that Strong was unconstitutionally using “official power to espouse [his] particular religious beliefs.” Strong refused to compromise from his position and reaffirmed his commitment to continue his practices until commanded otherwise by the courts.

Atheist Group Harasses County into Removing George Washington Quote from Website

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18645-ffrf-removes-out-of-context-washington-quote-that-puts-down-nonbelievers-august-23-2013>

The website for Creek County, Oklahoma, contained a quote from George Washington calling for acknowledgement of God’s providence in all things. The Freedom From Religion Foundation complained that the quote disparaged nonbelievers and called for its removal. The county acquiesced and deleted the quote.

City Eliminates Prayer from Anniversary Celebration

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18686-ffrf-ensures-ny-town%E2%80%99s-bicentennial-celebration-stays-secular-august-23-2013>

The town of Victor, New York, planned a bicentennial anniversary celebration of the city’s incorporation. The celebration was to include a prayer service. The Freedom From Religion Foundation told the town that such prayer would be an unconstitutional government endorsement of Christianity. The town submitted to the FFRF’s threat and cancelled the prayer service.

Anti-Religion Group Attempts to Coerce City Council into Abandoning Prayer

<http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/16132-texas-city-stands-up-to-atheists-over-prayers-at-government-meetings>

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/08/liberty-institute-helps-league-city.html>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a demand letter to Mayor Tim Paulissen and the city council of League City, Texas, calling for the immediate abandonment of the city’s tradition of opening council meetings with



an invocation. Instead of succumbing to the FFRF's threats, Mayor Paulisen retained Liberty Institute for counsel and boldly declared that he and the other counsel members had no plans to stop praying before meetings.

Atheist Groups Demand Halt to Prayers by City Council

http://www.chicoer.com/news/ci_23842557/whats-prayer-got-do-it-local-atheist-group

The Coalition of Reason and the Freedom From Religion Foundation called for Chico, California, to stop opening its city council meetings with prayer. Even though the U.S. Supreme Court declared that such actions were constitutional over thirty years ago, the groups allege that the practice unconstitutionally breaches separation of church and state. Chico City Attorney Lori Barker stated that the prayers are “clearly permitted by law” and that the city will not change its practice until mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court.

San Antonio Proposes Ordinance Limiting All Who Have Ever Held Traditional Views of Sexuality

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/08/san-antonios-proposed-ordinance-would.html>

<http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/san-antonio-passes-non-discrimination-law-christians-fear-reprisals.html>

San Antonio proposed an ordinance that would ban citizens who have ever held traditional religious views about sexuality from holding public office or performing city contracts and subcontracts. Liberty Institute submitted a letter to the mayor and city council opposing the ordinance and warning of its unconstitutionality. San Antonio enacted a modified version of the proposed ordinance.

Hotel Refuses to Provide Employee With Religious Accommodation

<http://eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/7-23-13.cfm>

A hotel group that owns and operates the Comfort Inn Oceanfront South in Nags Head, North Carolina, hired Claudia Neal, a Seventh-day Adventist, and agreed to give her a religious accommodation that exempted her from working on her Sabbath, which is from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. After a change in management, the hotel refused to uphold the religious accommodation and fired Neal. After Neal filed a religious discrimination lawsuit, the hotel agreed to settle by paying \$45,000 in damages to Neal and implementing policies and training to prevent religious discrimination in the future.

Cell Phone Retailer Refuses to Provide Employee With Religious Accommodation

<http://eEOC.gov/eEOC/newsroom/release/7-18-13a.cfm>

United Cellular, a Sprint Preferred Retailer headquartered in Irving, Texas, hired Charles Embry, a practicing Seventh-day Adventist, with full knowledge of Embry's need for a religious accommodation exempting him from working on his Sabbath, which is from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. Nevertheless, United Cellular scheduled Embry for weekends and terminated Embry after he continued to exercise his religious faith by honoring his Sabbath. The EEOC has filed suit (*EEOC v. United Cellular, Inc.*, Case No. CV-13-JHE-1207-NE) in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama.

Atheist Group Objects to Holocaust Memorial

<http://online.wsj.com/article/AP6a74789b5c1748418b33e05294cb1c2f.html>

<http://ffrf.org/images/Ohio%20Statehouse%20Holocaust%20Memorial.pdf>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18172-ffrf-objects-to-religious-symbol-at-ohio-capitol>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation complained that the display of a Star of David on a privately funded Holocaust memorial designed by a famed architect and displayed on Ohio statehouse grounds violated separation of church and state. Nonetheless, the Ohio Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board approved the display of the memorial.

Social Media Website Blocks Page About Christian Film

<http://townhall.com/columnists/toddstarnes/2013/07/19/why-did-facebook-block-kirk-camerons-new-movie-n1644555>

When Christian actor Kirk Cameron created a Facebook page for his newest faith-based film, "Unstoppable," Facebook blocked his page and sent a message informing him that the content was "abusive" and "unsafe." After his appeals to lift the block were ignored, Cameron alerted over 500,000 fans from his personal Facebook page. Facebook then immediately removed the block without explanation.

Rhode Island Governor Vetoes Bill Authorizing "Choose Life" License Plate

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/07/17/rhode-island-governor-vetoes-choose-life-license-plates/>

Governor Lincoln Chafee vetoed a bill that would have authorized the issuance of license plates reading "Choose Life." Half of the issuance cost of each plate would have gone to the CareNet Pregnancy Center of Rhode Island,

a Christian organization that offers free pregnancy testing, post-abortion counseling, and information about abortion alternatives. In striking down the bill, Governor Chafee stated that this type of funding would violate the separation of church and state.

YMCA Kicks Pro-Life Students Off Premises

<http://townhall.com/columnists/toddstarnes/2013/07/10/ymca-kicks-out-prolife-students-n1637757>

Over fifty members of a pro-life organization arrived in Austin, Texas, to peacefully protest at the Texas state capital. In advance of their trip, a local YMCA agreed to allow the students to shower in their facilities between 9 o'clock and 10 o'clock each night. When pro-abortion members of the local YMCA found out about the arrangement, they harassed the YMCA employees into revoking their agreement with the pro-life students.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Denounces Church Discount

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18205-ffrf-keeps-sushi-discounts-secular-july-16-2013>

After discovering that Tokyo Japanese Restaurant in Fairhope, Alabama, gave a ten percent discount to diners who brought in their church bulletin, the Freedom From Religion Foundation complained of discrimination and demanded that the restaurant change its practices. The restaurant complied and removed the flyer advertising the discount, clarifying that it respects all people, regardless of religious preference.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Attacks Kentucky Mayor for Religious References

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18229-ffrf-seeks-to-stop-mayors-proselytizing>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation found out that Mayor Rita Stephens of Hawesville, Kentucky, voluntarily wrote regular columns for the local newspaper that made references to God, the FFRF pounced on Stephens, demanding that she "quit using her civic 'bully pulpit' as an actual pulpit." The FFRF's demand letter also called for the immediate termination of prayer as a part of the city government meetings.

Atheist Group Calls for End of Prayer at Local Government Meeting

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18244-ffrf-seeks-end-to-divisive-prayer-at-ala-government-meetings>

The Alabama Public Service Commission opens its meetings with a prayer led by a member of a church or a friend of one of the commissioners. When

the Freedom From Religion Foundation found out, it vehemently objected to the custom and demanded that the Commission cease its practice of prayer.

Atheist Group Continues to Harass U.S. Government About Historical Religious References

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18273-ffrf-objects-to-religious-quotations-on-us-passports>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation continued its six-year protest against official U.S. passports containing historical quotations from past United States leaders referencing God by sending yet another demand letter objecting to such references. The United States government has not responded.

City Attempts to Block Church Services in Delaware

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/03/religion-protest-at-rehoboth-beach/2486107/>

Reverend Robert Dekker, the pastor of New Covenant Church in Lewes, Delaware, requested permission to conduct an eight-week sermon series by a public bandstand on Rehoboth Beach. Despite the fact that the City had allowed other groups to hold meetings on the beach, the mayor repeatedly denied Dekker's appeals. Word of the rejections became public, and members of the community united in support of Dekker. The mayor finally agreed to allow Dekker to hold a one-time meeting on July 4th. Over 1,500 people attended to back the church and rally for religious freedom.

New York City Police Spy on Muslims Solely Because of Their Religion

Raza v. City of New York, No. 1:13-cv-3448 (E.D.N.Y., filed June 18, 2013)

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) engaged in intensive, warrantless surveillance of Muslims merely because they were Muslims. There was no indication or suspicion of wrongdoing on the part of the targets. NYPD officers went undercover to record political and religious conversations of Muslims. In all of their surveillance, however, the NYPD did not uncover even a single lead or start even one terrorism investigation. The judge who originally authorized the NYPD to engage in some of these tactics called the program a "near-systemic failure" and said that the police had become "accustomed to disregarding" court orders. The NYPD settled a lawsuit challenging the surveillance after agreeing to strong oversight and a much more limited ability to engage in such surveillance.

Colorado Court Holds Governor's National Day of Prayer Proclamation Unconstitutional

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/17846-ffrf%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Ccolorado-day-of-prayer%E2%80%9D-victory-appealed-to-state-supreme-cou>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sued Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, asserting that his National Day of Prayer proclamations were an unconstitutional endorsement of religion. The state appeals court found that the Governor's proclamations were unconstitutional. The Colorado Supreme Court, however, dismissed the challenge to the National Day of Prayer proclamation.

Idaho Town Forced to Revoke Policy Permitting Any Peaceful Symbols on Water Tower

The city of Roberts, Idaho, removed three crosses adorning the local water tower following a complaint from City resident Joe Cohea, supported by the ACLU. It is Roberts's city policy that anyone may place symbols on the water tower so long as they are not offensive. After Cohea appealed to the ACLU for assistance, the town removed the crosses and replaced them with American flags. Cohea vowed to take legal action should the crosses be replaced, pursuant to his position that "no kind of religious symbol belongs on city property, period."

City Forces Catholic Pizza Shop Owner to Remove Statue from Privately Adopted Median

<http://www.wvlp.com/dpp/news/local/hampden/a-virgin-mary-statue-controversy-in-west-springfield>

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/09/06/virgin-mary-statue-installed-by-pizzeria-owner-on-mass-traffic-island-is/>

West Springfield, Massachusetts, pizza shop owner Antonio Liquori participated in a city beautification project by using funds from his business to adopt and beautify a local traffic island, which included a sign clearly indicating the property was adopted by his business. Nevertheless, when the city found out that he chose to include a small statue of the Virgin Mary as part of his beautification efforts, the city forced him to remove it, embarrassing and upsetting Mr. Liquori. The mayor allowed Mr. Liquori to replace the statue while the city researched the law, but while Mr. Liquori was out of the country, a vandal smashed the statue.

Cross Atop Mt. Rubidoux in California Auctioned by Riverside City Council

<http://blog.pe.com/riverside/2013/04/18/mount-rubidoux-cross-auction-outcome-satisfies-americans-united/>

A cross has remained atop Mt. Rubidoux in Riverside, California, for more than a century. Americans United for Separation of Church and State sent a letter to the city urging it to remove the cross. The Riverside City Council responded by voting to auction off the property rather than face the threat of a lawsuit. A nonprofit group called Totally Mount Rubidoux purchased the 0.43 acres on which the cross sits.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Attacks North Dakota Town's Prayer Tradition

http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/council-votes-to-reject-prayer-policy/article_48290210-053b-5a60-abd7-ee433a40b5c8.html

Rapid City, South Dakota, always opens its city council meetings with a prayer. The Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened to sue the city unless it ceases its invocation tradition. The city council unanimously rejected a proposed change in policy and still continues with prayer at the beginning of each meeting.

Christian Flower Shop Owner Attacked for Declining to Decorate Homosexual Wedding

<http://christiannews.net/2013/04/22/christian-florist-slammed-with-second-lawsuit-for-declining-to-decorate-homosexual-wedding/>

Baronelle Stutzman of Arlene's Flowers in Richland, Washington, had a long history of providing flowers to her homosexual customers But when one of her long-time customers requested flowers to decorate his wedding with his male partner, she respectfully "took his hands and said, 'I'm sorry. I cannot do your wedding because of my relationship with Jesus Christ.'" For this, anti-Christian activists have threatened to burn down her shop and sent harassing hate mail. Additionally, both the State of Washington and the ACLU have filed lawsuits to force Ms. Stutzman to either participate in homosexual weddings that she strongly believes to be immoral or get out of the wedding business altogether and pay steep fines.

Logistics Corporation Fires Employee for Seeking Religious Accommodation

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/04/11/suit-firing-based-on-religious-bias.html>

When shipping corporation Excel hired Yusuf Sufi, a practicing Muslim, the company gave him permission to use his vacation time and other time-off



hours to attend religious services required by the Muslim faith. However, after his local supervisors were replaced, his permissions were rescinded. Sufi told his supervisor that he would not be able to skip his mandatory services to work overtime and requested accommodation. Instead, Sufi was fired for his desire to honor his religious beliefs.

Company Fails to Reasonably Accommodate Muslim Employee

<http://eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/4-4-13.cfm>

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sued Bo-Cherry, Inc., for refusing to accommodate the religious exercise of a Muslim employee. The restaurant required the man to shave his beard rather than permitting him to use a beard hair net.

Woman Thrown off Metro Rail for Singing Spiritual Hymns

<http://www.wsvn.com/news/articles/local/21010031056296/elderly-woman-forced-off-metrorail-for-singing-hymns/>

A security guard physically forced Emma Anderson—an eighty-two-year-old woman—off the Metrorail at the Brickwell Metrorail Station in Miami, Florida, for publicly singing spiritual hymns. According to the security guard, public singing, dancing, and playing music without a permit is against the Miami-Dade Transit rules. However, the security guard overreacted to Ms. Anderson's religious songs, using excessive and unnecessary physical force to remove her. Ms. Anderson filed a lawsuit to recover for battery, assault, and negligence, in addition to filing charges to protect the rights of future passengers. The case settled.

Park Ranger Demands Vendor at Farmer's Market Remove Free Bibles from Her Table

<http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=1583>

Shirley Elliot sold produce at Thibodaux Farmer's Market in Louisiana and provided free Bibles on her table to anyone that wanted one. When a park ranger discovered the Bibles, he demanded Ms. Elliott remove the Bibles from her table because "they were on federal property." After the superintendent of the nearby park was informed of the unconstitutional religious discrimination against Ms. Elliot, he put an end to the park ranger's discrimination and restored Ms. Elliot's right to freely display Bibles on her table.

Atheist Group Demands Vietnam Veterans Memorial Be Removed

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/04/freedom-from-religion-foundation.html>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Coos Bay, Oregon, demanding that the city remove its Vietnam veterans memorial because

the memorial includes a cross. Liberty Institute is working with the city to preserve the veterans memorial. Since the FFRF sent its letter, the cross has been vandalized and a bomb was placed on the cross near a playground.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Demands Health Clinic Remove Religious Displays

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/17332-ffrf-removes-religious-postings-from-mo-health-clinic-march-10-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Swope Health East in Kansas City, Kansas, demanding it remove any religious symbolism on its walls to create a “welcoming and respectful” environment. The health clinic complied with the demand and removed all displays relating to religion.

Social Justice Organization Issues Report Urging Attacks on Religious Liberty

http://www.politicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/04/PRA_Redefining-Religious-Liberty_March2013_PUBLISH.pdf

A report issued by Political Research Associates, a self-proclaimed social justice organization, uses hyper-partisan political language to attack laws protecting the rights of individuals to live according to their religious beliefs and conscience. For example, the report describes laws protecting the rights of religious healthcare providers and employees to abstain from abortions, and litigation fighting to protect religious employees and small business owners from having to participate in homosexual commitment celebrations, as part of a “Christian right campaign to redefine ‘religious liberty.’” It characterizes these protections as a nefarious conservative conspiracy to harm women and homosexuals. Instead, the report argues, “true religious freedom” is merely “one of many civil rights” competing for public favor. Thus its scope and existence is subject to a “whole host of rules” issued by the sovereign state, which can choose to entirely eliminate religious liberty in hospitals and businesses. The report calls on “social justice forces” to engage in a coordinated campaign to overturn existing religious protections by enshrining its state-centric view of religious liberty into law and culture.

Kentucky Governor and LGBT Groups Warn that Religious Believers Pose Public Threat

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/ky-lawmakers-override-governors-veto-of-religious-liberties-bill-92857/>

The Kentucky Legislature overwhelmingly voted to override the Governor’s veto of a bill intended to protect sincere religious believers against gov-

ernment overreach and coercion. Opponents vilified religious believers by spreading offensive and invidious messages. One group labeled religious protections an “endorsement of discrimination,” placing “women, children, people of color, and all Kentuckians” at risk. Similarly, the Governor publicly expressed worry that protecting religious believers from governmental coercion may “threaten public safety, health care, and individuals’ civil rights.”

Secularists Challenge National Motto “In God We Trust”

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2013/03/suit-challenges-in-god-we-trust-on.html>

Michael Newdow, Freedom From Religion Foundation, and New York City Atheists challenged the national motto on Establishment Clause grounds. A New York district court dismissed the lawsuit. In 2006 a similar challenge by Newdow failed in a California federal district court.

Anti-Prayer Groups Intimidate Small Wisconsin Town to Abandon City Council Prayer

http://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/onalaska-council-to-consider-meeting-prayer/article_859510b0-5ae5-11e2-9b20-001a4bcf887a.html

<http://bloximages.chicago2.vip.townnews.com/lacrossetribune.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/c/af/caf05376-6f18-11e2-8ff4-001a4bcf887a/511033ec7fd27.pdf.pdf>

Onalaska, Wisconsin, was considering whether it should open its city council meeting in prayer. The council originally appeared open to the idea; however, the Freedom From Religion Foundation and a local Freethought Society strongly objected to prayer of any kind and scornfully referred to prayer as “coercive,” “presumptive,” and “unnecessary.” The groups warned of expensive lawsuits to follow. Concerned about the vocal opposition and fearful of future lawsuits, the city council reluctantly chose not to open its meetings with a prayer, even though The League of Wisconsin Municipalities maintains its legality and a neighboring town, the state legislature, and Congress all open in prayer.

ACLU Abandons Five-Year Challenge to Ten Commandments

http://www.lc.org/media/9980/attachments/pr_11th_district_fl_dixie_cty_10_command_dismissal_021313.pdf

<http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=1283>

In 2008, the ACLU sued Dixie County, Florida, to tear down the Ten Commandments display at the county courthouse. The only plaintiff it could find was an anonymous ACLU member from North Carolina claiming an

intention to someday purchase property in the county to “park a recreational vehicle.” In 2012, the Eleventh Circuit remanded the case to fully investigate the plaintiff’s standing and ordered the anonymous plaintiff’s deposition. In response to this, the ACLU filed a motion to dismiss its own suit in 2013, claiming that its anonymous plaintiff finally decided—six years after initiating the lawsuit—against purchasing property in the county.

Anti-Semitism Drives Lawsuits Against Proposed Jewish Eruvim in New York Town

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/05/nyregion/in-westhampton-beach-a-ritual-jewish-boundary-stirs-real-town-divisions.html?pagewanted=1>

Lawsuits have been filed to stop narrow plastic strips from being placed on telephone poles in the town of Westhampton Beach, New York, creating a symbolic boundary called an “eruvim.” Within an eruvim boundary, Orthodox Jews are permitted to carry items outside their homes on the Sabbath. The strips are painted to blend in and thus easily go unnoticed—much of Manhattan sits within an eruvim. Nevertheless, strong opposition has mounted against a proposed eruvim in Westhampton for fear that more Orthodox Jews will want to move into the city. Opponents filed three federal lawsuits, one of which was dismissed by a federal district court.

California Mall Threatens to Arrest Customer Peacefully Sharing his Faith with Shoppers

<http://www.pacificjustice.org/1/post/2013/01/-visalia-mall-sued-after-threatening-arrest-for-religious-speech.html>

John Vadanais would strike up peaceful conversations with mall visitors and discuss his faith in the common areas. The mall threatened to arrest him unless he ceased speaking about his faith in the mall. A lawsuit against the mall is pending.

Government Bans Prayer at Homeless Shelter in Illinois

<http://www.tristatehomepage.com/story/feds-pull-plug-on-pre-meal-prayer-at-shelter/d/story/PjIU1TiktkaARlubgMguQA>

The United Caring Shelter (UCS) in Evansville, Illinois, allowed anyone who wanted to pray before the free meal provided by the shelter to do so. The prayers were open to all and were not mandatory. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, however, demanded that UCS stop the prayers or stop accepting federal assistance to feed the homeless. The UCS now permits only a moment of silence before meals.

Steakhouse Threatened for “Church Member Appreciation Day”

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/15923-ffrf-stops-mississippi-restaurant%E2%80%99s-discriminatory-discount-sept-11-2012>

The Western Sizzlin’ Steakhouse in Wiggins, Mississippi, developed promotional offers to attract customers. One such offer was the “church member appreciation day,” during which church members could get a discount at the steakhouse. The Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened the steakhouse for offering this discount, asserting that this promotion violated the Civil Rights Act. The restaurant responded by stating that it would “discontinue including churches in [its] discount promotions and programs moving forward and will only offer them to other local businesses and companies that are not religious in nature.”

Freedom From Religion Foundation Fights Prayers Before County Commission Meetings

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2012/jun/16/chattanooga-citizens-sue-over-countyprayers/>

After the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a letter to Hamilton County Commissioners objecting to the practice of praying before County Commission meetings, the Commission continued the practice. The FFRF then filed suit, alleging the prayers violate the Establishment Clause.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Complains About Email Containing a Prayer

Religion Clause, “Group Says E-mail of Department Head’s Prayer to Employees Violated Establishment Clause,” available at <http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2012/05/group-says-e-mail-of-department-heads.html> (May 5, 2012)

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent the governor of Florida a letter complaining about an email sent by the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, David Wilkins. The email included a prayer that was read at the Florida National Day of Prayer ceremony. Wilkins claims that the email was merely a recap of a public appearance.

Massachusetts Town Attacked for Historic Cross Monument

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/south/2012/05/26/cross-traffic-island-middleborough-draws-complaint-sparks-constitutional-clash/aTbguKibe6mu86BrNCatdJ/story.html>

<http://www.tauntongazette.com/x574280362/Middleboro-could-face-lawsuit-over-cross-on-public/?tag=1>

Over fifty years ago, the Kiwanis Club erected a twelve-foot cross on a traffic

island in Middleborough, Massachusetts. Although considered a historic landmark, the town received a complaint about the constitutionality of the cross from a Boston attorney passing through the town. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) then condemned the display once the complaint went public. City officials initially resisted any change to the cross, but eventually decided to transfer the property to private ownership in an attempt to ensure the cross's vitality and to avoid a constitutional lawsuit. Nevertheless, the FFRF and ACLU continue to call for the cross's demolition.

City Council Reacts to Atheist's Complaints About Opening Prayer

Religion Clause, "Move of Prayer to Precede City Council Meeting Draws Protest," available at <http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2012/05/move-of-prayer-to-precede-citycouncil.html> (May 21, 2012)

An atheist University of Ohio student complained that the usual opening prayer of the Mount Vernon, Ohio, city council did not reflect the diversity of the community. After the council president moved the prayer to two minutes before the meeting, in answer to the student's request, several council members protested the move in the prayer time.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Complains Florist Refuses to Deliver Their Flowers

<http://www2.turnto10.com/news/2012/jan/19/10/florists-wont-make-delivery-prayerbanner-teen-ar-902053/>

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) forced a Rhode Island school to remove a fifty-year-old school prayer banner from the auditorium, which contained a prayer for the academic success of the students, because it said "Our Heavenly Father" and "Amen." Following the removal of the banner, a florist refused to deliver flowers from the FFRF to their successful plaintiff. FFRF filed a formal complaint against the florist.

Jewish Police Officer Files Employment Discrimination Claim After Run-in With Mel Gibson

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2012-01-16T07:10:00-05:00&max-results=20&start=620&by-date=false>

A Jewish police officer claims Mel Gibson verbally abused him because of his religion, and then the officer's superiors forced him to delete the anti-Semitic statements from his report. The officer claims he was later ostracized and denied promotion because of the incident.



City Threatened for Renting Amphitheater to Christian Musician

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/michael-w-smith-says-atheist-lawsuit-threat-is-absurd-78569/>

A resident of Draper, Utah, threatened to sue the city if it did not cancel a Michael W. Smith concert because the city rented the city's amphitheater to the Christian musician and facilitated ticket sales through the city's website. The city refused to cancel the concert and noted that it treated the Michael W. Smith concert in the same manner that it treats all groups that desire to perform at the amphitheater.

ACLU Silences Religious Prayer at City Council Meetings

<http://pointpleasant.patch.com/articles/point-beach-to-settle-lawsuit-with-aclu-afterchanging-prayer>

The city council of Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey, was opening its meetings with prayer, but a resident objected to the Lord's Prayer because it was Christian. The ACLU filed a claim against the city, but dropped it after an agreement was reached that the city council would use general prayers, not specific to any religion. The council must now pay over \$11,000 in attorney's fees to the ACLU.

Colorado Park and Recreation District Bans Menorah from Holiday Display

http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_19527120

The Colorado Park and Recreation District has banned the Lake House in Evergreen, Colorado, from displaying a menorah in its holiday display because the menorah is a religious symbol. The Lake House is still permitted to display a Christmas tree.

Christian Baker Sued for Refusing to Create Wedding Cake for Homosexual Wedding

<http://news.yahoo.com/colo-gay-discrimination-alleged-over-113354165.html>

<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/12/12/Christian-Baker-Willing-to-Go-to-Jail-for-Declining-Gay-Wedding-Cake>

Jack Phillips, owner of the Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colorado, refuses to make cakes that would violate his religious convictions. In the past, this has included refusing to make a Halloween-themed wedding cake. Now, however, the ACLU and the Colorado Attorney General's office are suing Mr. Phillips for refusing to create a cake for a homosexual wedding. A Colorado administrative law judge ruled that Phillips violated Colorado's antidiscrimination law and would face fines and prison if he persisted in

refusing to supply cakes for same-sex marriages in the future. Phillips plans on taking the case before the Colorado Court of Appeals.

City in Tennessee Sued for Having Crosses in Town

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2011/12/suit-challenges-crosses-on-public.html>

Freedom From Religion Foundation filed suit against the city of Whitesville, Tennessee, for having a cross on the water tower, in front of city hall, and on a city sidewalk.

Social Media Sites Censor Christian Views

Dave Bohan, "Study Shows Social Media Sites Censor Christian Views," *The New American*, available at <http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/997-study-shows-social-media-sites-censor-christian-views> (Sept. 18, 2011)

Social media websites are censoring Christian viewpoints, according to a new study from the National Religious Broadcasters association. The NRB published a press release claiming a recent study conducted by the organization found that Apple, the iTunes App Store, Google, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, AT&T, Comcast, and Verizon are potentially censoring Christian views from websites as part of a routine business practice.

Atheist Group Bullies City in California to Remove Historical Marker

<http://ffrf.org/news/action/item/15057-help-remove-cross-in-santa-clara-park>
<http://santaclaraca.gov/index.aspx?page=1455#memorial>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that Santa Clara, California, remove a granite cross from Memorial Cross Park. The Santa Clara Lions Club had donated the cross for the park as a historical marker to mark the location of a mission built in 1779.

NBC Removes "Under God" from Pledge of Allegiance

Huffington Post, "NBC Apologizes For Omitting 'Under God' From Pledge Of Allegiance," available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/19/nbc-us-open-undergod_n_880114.html (June 19, 2011)

NBC omitted the phrase "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance during an opening segment of the U.S. Open. NBC later apologized for the omission and changed its policy to ensure that senior level approval accompanies each piece of a broadcast.

Cisco Employee Fired for Religious Views About Marriage

http://townhall.com/columnists/mikeadams/2011/06/16/the_cisco_kid/page/full/

Dr. Frank Turek, a Cisco employee, was fired for his religious view that marriage should be between a woman and a man. He had never expressed this view at work, but did express it through a book he authored. Cisco's leadership discovered on the Internet that he had authored the book. The employee was fired without having been addressed about the issue or given opportunity to speak and despite high regard from other employees and managers.

Prayer at North Carolina County Commissioner Meeting Under Attack

<http://www.mountainx.com/article/26212/Buncombe-Commissioners-On-a-meeting-and-a-prayer>

Following the outcome in *Joyney v. Forsyth County*, many other North Carolina counties that open their county commissioner meetings with prayer are under attack. After twenty years of opening with prayer, the Buncombe County, North Carolina, commissioner meeting's prayer is being challenged.

Virginia High School Bans Students from Posting the Ten Commandments on their Lockers

Liberty Counsel, "Ten Commandments Pulled Off Students' Lockers by Virginia School Administration," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=1244> (Feb. 28, 2011)

The Floyd County High School administration banned students from posting religious material. This censorship came about when students who are members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes placed copies of the Ten Commandments on the fronts of their lockers. The administration removed the copy from each locker that displayed the Ten Commandments.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Fights Opening Meetings in Lodi, California, with Prayer

<http://www.examiner.com/article/lodi-city-council-votes-to-keep-prayer-as-uncensored-invocation-local-reactions>

http://www.lodinews.com/news/article_5aec0fac-b0a5-11e1-9ae5-001a4bcf887a.html

<http://www.fox40.com/news/headlines/ktxl-news-lodiprayer,0,2350438.story>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened to file a lawsuit against the City of Lodi, California, unless it ended its tradition of opening meetings with an invocation. The City Council unanimously chose to continue its invitation to people of any faith or no faith to pray or offer a "call to civic responsibility"

before its meetings. Opponents were still unhappy with the nonexclusion policy, claiming that those of minority religions or no religion would still feel excluded because Christianity was the majority religion.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Intimidates City Council into Banning “Jesus” from Prayers

http://www.tracypress.com/pages/full_story/push?article-Council+asks+pastors+to+leave+-Jesus-+out+of+prayers%20&id=3618283-Council+asks+pastors+to+leave+-Jesus-+out+of+prayers&instance=home_news_bullets

The Tracy, California, city council bowed to legal threats brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation and instructed any person giving an opening prayer that it is illegal to mention Jesus Christ in the prayer.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Celebrates Making Ohio City “Less Holy”

<http://ffrf.org/publications/freethought-today/articles/foundation-takes-on-prayer/>

The city council of Toledo, Ohio, invited various religious organizations from the community to open its meetings in prayer. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) threatened to sue the city for opening with prayer, urging the city to end the prayers completely. The city avoided litigation by prohibiting references to specific religions, prompting FFRF to announce that it made the city “a little less holy.”

Atheist Group Requests to Display a Sign with an Atheistic Message Next to a Nativity Scene

<http://www.cbs19.tv/story/16222265/nativity-controversy-in-east-texas-stirs-emotions>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has caused a controversy by requesting that a sign be put up next to the Nativity scene decoration in Athens, Texas, that says, “There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell.”

Indiana Town Stands Up to Freedom From Religion Foundation over Nativity Scene

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2010/12/indiana-county-will-not-remove-creche.html>

Franklin County, Indiana, announced that it would refuse to remove a Nativity scene from the courthouse lawn unless a court orders it to do so. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote the county a letter complaining that the Nativity scene was too religious despite the presence of reindeer and a Christmas tree in the display. The county commissioner gave quite a

feisty reply, saying that the people of Franklin County could fight and that the FFRF should be ready for it.

Sheriff's Personally-Funded Ad Draws Criticism from Atheist Organization

<http://www.jdnews.com/articles/watchdog-97742-group-county.html>

The sheriff of Onslow County, North Carolina, ran an ad in the local newspaper encouraging citizens to live by good values, which he claims in the ad line up with Christian values. The sheriff paid for the ad with his own money, although it did bear the image of his badge. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter to the county claiming that the ad showed that the police supported Christianity. The sheriff denies the claims in FFRF's letter and says that he will continue to run the ad.

County in South Carolina Permits Political Signs but Bans Religious Signs

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2010/10/suit-says-county-sign-control-ordinance.html>

Berkeley County, South Carolina, requires its residents to obtain a permit to place signs in their yards. Political signs and for sale signs are deemed appropriate, but signs that carry a religious message are not. One resident, Moultrie, was cited for having signs with Bible verses on them. Moultrie filed suit against the county alleging violations of free expression, free exercise, and equal protection rights.

Suggested Ten Commandments Monument Sparks Tension in Marion, Illinois

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2010/08/heated-debate-on-10-commandments.html>

At a city council meeting in Marion, Illinois, a resident proposed that a Ten Commandments monument be put up on a church or other private property in town. An atheist activist named Rob Sherman, however, who had come from Chicago to attend the meeting, vehemently objected to the idea. Sherman's objection sparked anger among the Marion citizens, who swore to build the monument.

Owners of Vermont Inn Fined \$30,000 for Refusing to Host Homosexual Wedding

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/owners-of-vermonts-wildflower-inn-oppose-maines-same-sex-marriage-referendum-in-new-video-83747/>

Jim and Mary O'Reilly own the Wildflower Inn in Vermont. Although the O'Reilly's open their inn to homosexuals, they could not, because of their Catholic faith, host a homosexual wedding at the inn. The ACLU then filed

a lawsuit against the O'Reillys. They were forced to pay \$30,000 to the homosexual couple and the Vermont Human Rights Commission.

Kentucky Rejects "In God We Trust" License Plate

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/10/07/kentucky-group-sues-rejection-god-trustlicense-plate/>

A group that advocates against pornography, called ROCK, applied for a special license plate that had "In God We Trust" on it. Kentucky rejected the application, stating that the primary purpose of ROCK is to advance religion because there is one Bible verse on ROCK's website. The group filed suit against Kentucky, claiming a violation of its equal protection rights, but the court upheld the state's rejection of the plate.

Evangelists Detained at the NCAA Final Four in Indianapolis

<http://www.ic.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=1179>

A group of street evangelists called the Good Messengers distributed tracts on a public sidewalk outside Lucas Oil Stadium during an NCAA Final Four game. They were questioned by two police officers, and one of the evangelists was detained and accused of solicitation and trespass. As a result of this event, Indianapolis released a legal bulletin to local law enforcement officers clarifying that street evangelists are engaging in constitutionally protected activity.

Hawaii Citizens for Separation of Church and State Oppose Honolulu City Council Prayers

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2010/04/prayers-at-honolulu-city-council.html>

The Honolulu City Council opens its meetings with an "aloha message." Many people who deliver the message choose to do so with a prayer. The Hawaii Citizens for Separation of Church and State complained to the city council about the practice, saying it is unconstitutional. The council chairman, however, refused to stop the practice.

Man Challenges Use of Recycled Church Pews in Courtroom

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2010/feb/22/man-decries-courts-church-pews/>

A Mississippi municipal courthouse recycled pews from a local church to save money. Carroll Roberson, after seeing the pews when at his hearing for disorderly conduct, decided to challenge their use on Establishment Clause grounds because the pews contained crosses on each end.

Ohio Town Removes Ten Commandments Sign to Avoid Litigation

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2009/12/17/Village-to-remove-Ten-Commandmentssign/UPI-49941261096450/

A Lockland, Ohio, resident filed a federal lawsuit asking for removal of a Ten Commandments sign outside the town hall and \$500,000 in punitive damages. To avoid litigation, the town submitted to the resident's wishes and removed the sign.

Christmas Displays Banned from Washington State Capitol After Complaint

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/11/27/washington-state-implement-rules-barring-holiday-displays-inside-capitol/>

The state of Washington no longer permits any holiday display other than the "holiday tree" inside its capitol building, following a complaint from the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

Federal Reserve Board Demands Bank Remove Religious Christmas Decorations

<http://www.koco.com/After-Outcry-Feds-Back-Down-Banks-Can-Display-Crosses/-/9844716/10744924/-/blj7m4/-/index.html>

An Oklahoma bank was forced to remove Bible verses from its website, crosses from teller stations, and buttons that carried a Christian Christmas message for a day after a visit from Federal Reserve employees. The Federal Reserve Board ruled that banks may not make any religious statement as doing so might discourage people from applying for loans. The Federal Reserve employees checking the bank to make sure it complied with regulations cited the religious material and demanded its removal. After the president of the bank challenged the Federal Reserve, however, the religious items were restored while the Federal Reserve made a more thorough investigation of the issue.

Employee Fired for Religious Conviction Against Saying "Happy Holidays."

Liberty Counsel, "Employee Forced to Say "Happy Holidays" Was Fired After Objecting to the Greeting," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=760> (Dec. 22, 2008)

An employee in Panama City, Florida, was fired after claiming religious convictions barred her from using the greeting "happy holidays." The employee was asked to leave immediately and verbally abused. The police were called and forced her to leave.

Governor of Washington Permits Anti-Faith Display in the Capitol

Liberty Counsel, "Washington Governor Approves Anti-Faith Sign," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=757> (Dec. 10, 2008)

The governor of Washington allowed an anti-faith sign to be displayed in the state Capitol. The sign stated, "There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds." The governor argued that she had no choice, as other symbols of faith were allowed to be displayed.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Challenges Nativity Scene in Green Bay, Wisconsin

Liberty Counsel, "City Receives Early Christmas Present in Legal Victory Over Anti-Religious Group," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=737> (Oct. 8, 2008)

A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit from the Freedom from Religion Foundation challenging Green Bay, Wisconsin's display of a Nativity scene at city hall.

Street Preachers Threatened with Arrest in Canon City, Colorado

Liberty Counsel, "Police Back Away From Threats to Arrest Christians for Publicly Sharing Their Faith," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=560> (Mar. 30, 2007)

Norman Robinovitz and Bill Phillips stood on public sidewalks talking to people about their Christian faith and handing out literature. One evening, after they shared their Christian faith with individuals outside of two local bars, someone called police to investigate their activities. The men were threatened with arrest for disorderly conduct and were told if they continued their activities they were "headed for jail time."

Employee Fired for Religious and Political Message Written on His Car

<http://www.crosswalk.com/1441745>

A Cargill Foods employee was fired over the display of a sign on his private vehicle. The sign said, "Please vote for marriage on Nov. 7." The statement reflected the employee's religious conviction that marriage should remain a union of one man and one woman. The company tried to force him to remove the hand-painted sign from his rear window after other employees claimed to be offended.

City Pressures Christmas Festival to Not Display Movie *The Nativity*

Letter from Jay Alan Sekulow to Mara S. Georges, available at <http://www.aclj.org/media/pdf/ChicagoLetter.pdf> (Nov. 28, 2006)

Christmas festival organizers were pressured by city officials to remove the



movie “The Nativity” from the festivities. City officials feared that the movie would be offensive to non-Christians.

School Stops Third Grader from Handing Out Candy Canes with the Story of Jesus’ Birth

Rob Phillips, “School quashes handing out Jesus candy canes,” Northwest Herald, available at <http://aclj.org/aclj/northwest-herald---crystal-lake-il---school-quasheshanding-out-jesus-candy-canes> (Jan. 14, 2005)

Third grader Renee Crout was told by her teacher that she could not hand out candy canes with the story of the birth of Jesus attached. Renee’s mother removed her from the school and sent her to a nearby private school.

Florida County Orders the Removal of All Christmas Trees from County Facilities

Letter from Francis J. Manion to John J. Gallagher, County Administrator, available at http://c0391070.cdn2.cloudfiles.rackspacecloud.com/pdf/041216_fl_christmas_tree_letter2.pdf (Dec. 16, 2004)

Pasco County, Florida, demanded that all county offices and facilities remove Christmas trees. The county claimed that displays of Christmas trees are a violation of the Constitution. The county rescinded its order two days after demanding the trees be removed.

Police Officer Banned from Posting About Prayer Meeting

Alliance Defense Fund, “Another Effort to Censor Religious Speech Halted...,” available at http://oldsite.alliancedefensefund.org/userdocs/updates/2004_0810.html (Aug. 10, 2004)

The chief of the Janesville, Wisconsin, police department banned officer Sean Jauch from posting announcements for his prayer group on the police department’s bulletin board after receiving a complaint that one of the posts was harassing and offensive because it quoted Hebrews 11:6. After Jauch sought legal assistance, the police chief relented.

Employee Fired for Wearing Ten Commandments Lapel Pin

Jeremy Gray, “Man Fired Over Lapel Pin Garner Support,” Birmingham News (June 27, 2004)

The Hoover Chamber of Commerce fired employee Christopher Word because he wore a Ten Commandments lapel pin.

Los Angeles County Removes Cross from Seal After Threat from the ACLU
Sue Fox, "Facing Suit, County to Remove Seal's Cross," L.A. Times, June 2, 2004, at B1

Los Angeles County was threatened with a lawsuit if the county did not remove a cross from the county's seal. The county succumbed to the ACLU's pressure and decided to remove the cross. The cross had adorned the seal since 1957 along with a cow, a tuna fish, a Spanish galleon, the Hollywood Bowl, and the Goddess Pomono. The region was settled by Catholic missionaries and the cross memorialized that historical fact. In January of 2014, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors approved the restoration of the cross to the seal.

ACLU Pressures Redlands, California, into Removing Cross from City Seal
Hugo Martin, "Facing ACLU Complaint, City to Drop Seal's Cross," L.A. Times, April 29, 2004, at B1

The City of Redlands was threatened with a lawsuit if the city did not remove a cross from the city's seal. The city decided to remove the cross rather than fight a legal battle against the ACLU, despite many protests from citizens who wanted the cross to stay on the city seal.

Vermont Couple Denied License Plates with Religious Message
FoxNews.com, "Tongue Tied: A Report From the Front Line of the Culture Wars," available at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,28025,00.html> (June 27, 2001)

Robert and Nancy Zins attempted to purchase specialty plates in Vermont for herself and for her husband with the messages "ROMANS8" and "ROMANS5" on the plates, but her request was denied by the Vermont DMV, which claimed that the messages might be offensive. After first going through the Agency of Transportation, a lawsuit was filed to protect her free speech rights and her ability to select a message for her license plate, just as other, nonreligious citizens were free to do.

U.S. Capitol Visitor's Center Replaces "In God We Trust" with Erroneous National Motto
<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2008/12/02/56905/conservative-lawmakers-bring-god.html>

When the \$621 million U.S. Capitol Visitor's Center was opened, Senator DeMint pointed out that it incorrectly identified "E Pluribus Unum" as the national motto instead of the actual motto: "In God We Trust." The center also downplays the Founding Fathers' faith in God but prominently displays

a quote from a Massachusetts lawyer from the 1830s: “We have built no temple but the Capitol. We consult no common oracle but the Constitution.”

Jewish Prison Guard Refused Ability to Schedule Work Around the Sabbath

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251759857274&ssbinary=true>

Schutte, a Jewish prison guard, sued the Department of Corrections in Colorado for not allowing him to schedule his work around the Sabbath, which spans from Friday night to Saturday. As a Messianic Jew, Schutte does not believe in working on the Sabbath. An Administrative Law Judge found the Department of Correction’s refusal to work to accommodate Schutte a violation of Title VII.

Tennessee Attorney General Finds “Jesus is Lord” License Plate Unconstitutional

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2010/04/tennessee-ag-opinion-says-jesus-is-lord.html>

The Tennessee Attorney General decided that a specialty license plate bearing the message, “Jesus is Lord” was unconstitutional. Tennessee refused to issue the plate.

ACLU Works to Stop Tourism Grant from Going to Christian Concert

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/aclu-wants-to-ensure-freedom-fest-not-overtly-christian/912837>

Hernando County, Florida, makes grants available for events that will bring tourists into the county in order to spur economic development and promote the county as a tourist destination. The Tourist Development Council approved a grant for the Freedom Fest, a Christian music festival held on the Fourth of July weekend. Despite the secular purpose of the grant and the neutral manner in which it is granted, the ACLU complained about the funds going to a religious festival. In response to the complaints, the festival was forced to change its name from the “God and Country” festival to the “Family, Freedom, and Country” festival, and the grant had to be given directly to vendors instead of the organization promoting the festival. The ACLU nevertheless warned that any “overt religious overtones” at the event would cause “trouble” for the county.

Voluntary After-Prison Rehab Center Closed Because of Its Faith-Based Technique

<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070510/NEWS/705100414>

<http://www.au.org/our-work/legal/successes/falls-river-ma>

The Bristol County, Massachusetts, sheriff's department funded a rehabilitation program to help recently released prisoners reintegrate into society. The program was completely voluntary and boasted an 86% success rate at keeping participants from returning to jail versus a 7% success rate for secular programs. Despite the program's success, Americans United for Separation of Church and State threatened legal action against the county for funding a faith-based organization. The sheriff gave in to the pressure and closed the program.

Girl Barred from Singing "Kum Ba Yah" at Boys & Girls Club Talent Show

http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2000-08-16/news/0008160005_1_talent-show-girls-club-club-s-executive-director

Samantha Schulz, an eight-year-old girl from Port Charlotte, Florida, was barred from singing "Kum Ba Yah" at a Boys & Girls Club talent show because the song included the words "Oh, Lord." The club's director said, "You have to check your religion at the door." The executive director of the Sarasota County Boys & Girls Club apologized and invited Schulz to perform the song at another talent show.

Post Office Promotes Secularization of Christmas Season

Bill McAllister, "Gearing Up for Christmas," Washington Post, Sept. 29, 1995, at N66

The Post Office issued guidelines advising clerks to use words like "Happy Holidays" and to avoid any decorations with a religious theme.

Coach Banned from City Recreation Facility for Religious Speech

<http://oldsite.alliancedefensefund.org/actions/victories/freedom.aspx?cid=3176#victory27>

A swim coach in Northglenn, Colorado, shared his faith as he coached swimming in the city recreation facility. The city recreation facility's director sent the coach a letter informing him that he was no longer welcome on the premises of the city recreation facility. A concerned parent inquired to the city to find out why the coach had been banned and was told that the coach used offensive language, but upon further investigation the parent discovered that

the coach's religious speech was the problem. The coach filed a lawsuit and the district court ordered the recreation facility to allow the coach to return..

Freedom From Religion Foundation Threatens Commissioner for Having a Cross and Nativity Scene in his Personal Office

<http://www.upnorthlive.com/news/story.aspx?id=584728>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Dennis Lennox, a county drain commissioner, threatening a lawsuit if he would not remove a cross and Nativity scene from his personal office. FFRF claimed the display is a violation of the Establishment Clause. Lennox commented, "This is my private office in my private area, I'm not trying to force my faith down anybody's throat[;] I'm just saying I celebrate Christmas."

High School Student Threatened with Suspension for Posting Flyers of the Ten Commandments

Nicole Buzzard, "A Youth with a Mission: A Santiago High School Junior Seeks to Post the Ten Commandments at Corona-Norco Campuses," The Press Enterprise Co. (Riverside, CA), June 30, 2004 at B01

High school junior Jason Farr wanted to post the Ten Commandments in his school and other schools in his district. He posted flyers of the Ten Commandments, which resulted in a threat of a five-day suspension. Additionally, Farr was informed that the Bible was not suitable material for the silent reading period, despite the fact that it fulfilled page and genre requirements.

Library Refuses to Include Christmas in Holiday Book Display

Terry Mattingly, "On Religion: Things Got Rough on Church-State Front This Holiday Season," Naples Daily News, Jan. 17, 2004

When a pastor in Chandler, Arizona, complained that a public library display excluded Christmas and only included Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, the library took down the entire display rather than add any information about Christmas.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Attacks Mother Teresa Stamp

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,584165,00.html>

The United States Postal Service (USPS) honored Mother Teresa, a Noble Peace Prize recipient, with a memorial stamp for her humanitarian relief. The Freedom From Religion Foundation criticized the stamp as a violation of USPS regulations by honoring a religious figure and called on its members to boycott the stamp and begin a letter campaign to expose the "darker side" of Mother Teresa.

Historical Cross Attacked by ACLU and Cut Down by Vandals

<http://www.kionrightnow.com/story/11277495/city-of-monterey-wants-to-restore-cross>

<http://www.au.org/church-state/april-2010-church-state/au-bulletin/beach-cross-movesto-church-land-in-california>

A cross, erected in 1969 on Del Monte Beach in Monterey, California, to commemorate the bicentennial of Don Gaspar de Portolá's raising a cross to signal a supply ship, was attacked by the ACLU as a violation of the Establishment Clause. During the dispute, vandals cut down the cross. The ACLU vigorously objected when the city council considered replacing the cross. Despite an initial unanimous decision to rebuild the cross, the city eventually relented to the legal threats and submitted to the ACLU's demands.

High School Student Threatened with Suspension for Posting Flyers of the Ten Commandments

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Freedom From Religion Foundation Scares Michigan Town into Abandoning "Christmas Break"

<http://ffrf.org/uploads/legal/petoskeynews.pdf>

The Petoskey, Michigan, School Board wanted to reinstate "Christmas Break" as a replacement for "Winter Holiday Break." The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) quickly responded with the threat of litigation unless "Christmas" was removed. The school avoided litigation by submitting to FFRF's requests.

Complaint Leads Tennessee Town to End Tradition of Reading from Luke at Christmas

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2009/dec/07/biblical-reading-scratched-from-maryvilleyuletide/>

For twenty-two years, the town of Maryville, Tennessee, had a local radio personality read from the Book of Luke during the Christmas tree lighting



ceremony. Following a complaint, the town decided that it would no longer include the traditional reading during the ceremony.

Oregon Elementary School Bans Christmas Trees, Santa Claus, and Dreidels

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091204/NEWS/912040329>

An elementary school in Ashland, Oregon, banned Christmas trees, Santa Claus figures, and dreidels following a complaint from a parent. The school decided that the only acceptable decorations are wreaths, snowflakes, snowmen, candles, and candy canes. The school's Christmas tree, which had no religious decorations, was replaced with a large snowman.

Sonoma County Keeps Star and Angels on Christmas Tree

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2009/12/county-reverses-order-on-removing-stars.html>

An atheist activist pressured Sonoma County, California, administrator Chris Thomas into removing the star and angels off of the county's Christmas tree. The activist complained that the decorations were religious symbols. After further reflection, however, Thomas reinstated the star and angels because he found them to be generic Christmas decorations.

City in California Backs Down from Replacing Its "Christmas Parade" with a "Holiday Parade"

<http://www.mercedsunstar.com/2009/12/01/1201213/christian-organization-sayschristmas.html>

Merced, California, attempted to change the name of its annual parade from the "Christmas Parade" to the "Holiday Parade" to avoid lawsuits. The city officials quickly backed down, however, following a strong backlash from its citizens and changed the name back to the "Christmas Parade."

Town Bans All Holiday Decorations from Memorial Square

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2009/11/town-decides-to-remove-creche-rather.html>

The council of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, decided that it would rather have no holiday decorations on its Memorial Square than have a variety of different religious decorations. This decision was prompted by a complaint from an atheist group that wanted to put up a sign on the square that said, "Celebrating Solstice. Honoring Atheist War Veterans." The only decorations now allowed on the square are flowers and American flags.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Threatens Technical Colleges in Wisconsin for Observing Good Friday Holiday

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2009/01/good-friday-time-off-at-wisconsin-tech.html>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent letters to technical colleges in Wisconsin threatening the colleges for having Good Friday as a holiday. Several technical colleges indicated that they would eliminate the holiday.

Garden City Long Island, New York, Schools Ban Teachers from Observing Religious Holidays

Teachers in Garden City Long Island, New York, wanted to use personal days to observe religious holidays, which is one of the listed permissible uses for a personal day. When some Catholic teachers requested to use a personal day for Holy Thursday and some Jewish teachers wanted to use a personal day during Passover, however, they were denied and were forced to use arbitration to prevent the religious discrimination.

Governor of Washington Allows Menorah and Christmas Tree but Not Creche at Christmas

Eugene Register-Guard, *"Menorah, not Nativity scene, finds place in state Capitol,"* Dec. 22, 2006, at D5.

Governor Chris Gregoire lit a menorah in a celebration at the state Capitol, and accepted the gift of a menorah for her home. The menorah that was lit during the ceremony was displayed in the Capitol rotunda with a Christmas tree. However, when a local resident asked for a Nativity scene to be displayed with the menorah and the tree, the Governor refused.

Nativity Scene and Star of David Removed from Teacher's Holiday Decorations

Liberty Counsel, "Twas Two Weeks Before Christmas, And All Through The Land...", available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=261> (Dec. 13, 2006)

McNair Middle School in Fayetteville, Arkansas, removed a Nativity scene and a Star of David from a teacher's holiday display, which also included secular holiday decorations. After being provided with a legal memorandum explaining that the display was constitutional, the school returned the decorations.

ACLU Threatens County for Allowing Nativity Scene to be Displayed in Open Forum

Liberty Counsel, "Twas Two Weeks Before Christmas, And All Through The Land...," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=261> (Dec. 13, 2006)

The ACLU threatened Cumberland County, Tennessee, because a Nativity scene was placed in an open forum outside of the county courthouse.

"Cold in the Night" Replaces "Silent Night" in Wisconsin School

Liberty Counsel, "School Dumps 'Cold in the Night' and Returns to 'Silent Night,'" available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=480> (Dec. 14, 2005)

Ridgeway Elementary School in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, planned to perform "Cold in the Night," a secularized version of "Silent Night," at its "winter party." The plan was abandoned after the school received large numbers of phone calls and emails opposing the violation of this traditional and historic Christmas song.

Senior Citizens Banned from Singing Christmas Carols in Their Homes

Liberty Counsel, "Housing Authorities Tell Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities 'No Christmas this Year,'" available at <http://www.lc.org/pressrelease/2005/nr121305b.htm> (Dec. 13, 2005)

Senior citizens living in facilities owned by the Housing Resource Development Corporation were told they could not sing Christmas carols. Following an attorney's demand letter, the facility reversed its decision.

No Christmas Decorations at Senior Citizens' Home

Liberty Counsel, "Housing Authorities Tell Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities 'No Christmas this Year,'" available at <http://www.lc.org/pressrelease/2005/nr121305b.htm> (Dec. 13, 2005)

Residents at Bethany Towers, which provides housing for low-income senior citizens and persons with disabilities, were told that they could not display any religious decorations in any common area or on the exterior of their rooms. Management removed nativity scenes and other religious decorations set up by the seniors, even taking angels off of the Christmas tree.

NYC's Environmental Protection Agency Allows Hanukkah Banners, Bans Christmas Banners

Liberty Counsel, "Christmas 'Grinches' Are On The Run," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=536> (Dec. 13, 2005)

The NYC Environmental Protection Agency allowed its employees to have Hanukkah banners and, in the past, allowed employees to celebrate the

Indian festival of Diwali. The agency banned Christmas banners, however, along with red and green decorations and even removed the “holiday trees.” Following a staff petition, the agency allowed the Christmas decorations and issued an apology to employees.

Indiana State Department of Health Requires “Holiday,” Not “Christmas,” Parties

Liberty Counsel, “Christmas ‘Grinches’ Are On The Run,” available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=536> (Dec. 13, 2005)

The Indiana State Department of Health told its employees that they could not have Christmas parties during lunch hours. The parties had to be “holiday” rather than “Christmas” parties, and the employee-initiated parties could have no religious content. Following a demand letter, the department allowed employees to have their own Christmas parties with religious content.

Florida Elementary Schools Bans “Merry Christmas”

Liberty Counsel, “Christmas ‘Grinches’ Are On The Run,” available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=536> (Dec. 13, 2005)

Teachers and students at Boulevard Heights Elementary School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, were told that they may not say, “Merry Christmas.” The school recommended “Happy Holidays” as an alternative.

School Door Decorating Contest Bans Religious Content

Liberty Counsel, “Christmas Themes Once Banned From Student Door Decorating Competition Will Now Be Allowed,” available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=475> (Dec. 9, 2005)

D.C. Everest Senior High School announced a “Winter Spirit Week Door Decorating Contest.” The rules stated that doors could be decorated to depict “[a]ny winter scene,” so long as there were “[n]o religious ties.” The principal said that any doors with religious themes would be disqualified. After receiving more than 200 student petitions and a demand letter, as well as legal advice of their own, the school changed the rules to allow religious depictions.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Attempts to Eliminate Good Friday As Government Holiday

<http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/90885039.html#!page=10&pageSize=10&sort=newestfirst>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter of complaint to the city of Milwaukee to end its Good Friday Holiday. It cited a 1996 federal district court case declaring the holiday unconstitutional.

Firefighters Remove Christmas Lights After Neighbors Complain of Being Offended

Terry Mattingly, "On Religion: Things Got Rough on Church-State Front This Holiday Season," Naples Daily News, Jan. 17, 2004

Firefighters in Glenview, Illinois, were forced to take down their station's Christmas lights after neighbors complained of being offended.

Florida City Council Suggests Limiting Religious Holidays

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=950434>

The multicultural committee for North Miami Beach, Florida, recommended that city council limit each "legal" religion to one religious holiday proclamation. Not only does this require the city to choose which religions are acceptable, but it forces Christians to choose between Easter and Christmas.

Post Office Replaces Madonna and Child Stamp

McAllister, Bill "Postal Service Ends Christ Camp Stamp Series", Washington Post, Nov. 19, 1994 at Fl.

The Post Office replaced its Madonna and Child stamp in the holiday stamp collection with an angel stamp after using the Madonna and Child for 28 years. The Post Office resumed the stamp after there was a public outcry.



MANAGING EDITORIAL TEAM



Kelly Shackelford, Esq., has been President, CEO, and Chief Counsel of First Liberty Institute (formerly Liberty Institute) since 1997. He is a constitutional scholar who has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, testified before the U.S. House and Senate on constitutional issues, and won landmark First Amendment and religious liberty cases. He was named one of the 25 greatest Texas lawyers of the past quarter-century by *Texas Lawyer*, and he is also the recipient of the prestigious William Bentley Ball Award for Life and Religious Freedom Defense for his leadership and pioneering work protecting religious freedom. He is on the Board of Trustees of the U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society.



Justin Butterfield, Esq., graduated from Harvard Law School in 2007. He served as the student coordinator for the well-known Veritas Forum, was a member of the Federalist Society, and was heavily involved with the Harvard Law School Christian Fellowship. A native Texan, Mr. Butterfield completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Texas at El Paso where he earned a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. He graduated *summa cum laude*, with honors, and was a University Banner Bearer.

The Managing Editorial Team also wishes to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of the attorneys, research fellows, and interns at First Liberty Institute, who both know the legal landscape of religious liberty and strive to keep religious liberty as America's first liberty.



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UNDENIABLE, 2017 Edition is published by First Liberty Institute, the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious liberty for all Americans. First Liberty Institute's President, CEO, and Chief Counsel is Kelly Shackelford, Esq., a constitutional scholar who has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court and is a recipient of the William Bentley Ball Award for his pioneering work protecting religious freedom.

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