

Animal Rights Activists Continue Oppression of Los Angeles Orthodox Jewish Community During the Jewish High Holy Days

First Liberty Institute files for an emergency protective order after activists renege on promise to refrain from harassing and threatening to arrest members of local synagogues.

LOS ANGELES, California—On early Thursday morning, First Liberty Institute attorneys filed for an emergency protective order in *APRL v. City of Los Angeles* on behalf of five Orthodox Jewish congregations and their members. The action comes two weeks after the filing of a lawsuit seeking to compel the cities of Los Angeles and Irvine to prevent Orthodox Jews from participating in a millennia-old religious ritual while claiming the right to place individual kaporos participants under “private persons arrest” if the police will not. Last week, activists promised that Orthodox Jews practicing kaporos would not be physically assaulted or threatened with arrest.

Yet, Wednesday evening, the activists stormed onto the property of one First Liberty’s clients, stole his chickens, and told him he would be placed under private persons arrest. Most of the activists fled the scene before the police arrived. Both the LAPD and Los Angeles Animal Services investigated the allegations of the activists and found First Liberty’s client to be in compliance with the law.

“This kind of oppression by animal rights activists against the Orthodox Jewish community must stop,” said Stephanie Taub, counsel to First Liberty. “No one should fear being placed under arrest—by the police or fellow citizens—for peacefully exercising their religion.”

Kaporos is a historic religious rite that takes place between the Jewish Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, where the atonement of sins is contemplated through prayer and the kosher and humane killing of a chicken.

“For several years, the Orthodox Jewish community of Los Angeles and Irvine has been forced to respond to lawsuits, trespassers, vandals, thieves, and now the prospect of being placed under arrest—all during the holiest days of their religious calendar,” said Taub. “No one should be forced to answer lawsuits, fend off vandals and thieves, or be subject to arrest while peacefully practicing of their faith.”

Last year, First Liberty defended the Chabad of Irvine against two lawsuits brought by activists opposed to kaporos. Learn more about these cases at FirstLiberty.org/Chabad. An earlier suit brought separately by the same attorneys against specific members of the Los Angeles orthodox community and their synagogues (*United Poultry Concerns, Inc. vs. Bait Aaron, Inc.*), was dismissed outright, thanks to Aryeh Kaufman of the Law Office of Aryeh Kaufman, and G. Scott Sobel, of the Law Office of G. Scott Sobel, on freedom of religion grounds by the Los Angeles Superior Court.

First Liberty has moved to intervene on behalf of its clients for the sole purpose of obtaining a protective order to ensure the constitutional rights of their clients are fully protected.

Learn more at FirstLiberty.org/Kaporos.

###

About First Liberty Institute

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

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.