

First Liberty Asks U.S. Supreme Court to Review Decision on Legislative Prayers

First Liberty attorneys say circuit split creates imminent need for Supreme Court review

WASHINGTON— First Liberty Institute on Thursday asked the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Rowan County, North Carolina to review the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in *Rowan County v. Lund* prohibiting Rowan County’s commissioners from opening their meetings with prayer. The federal courts of appeal are split over whether prayers offered by legislators at local government meetings are unconstitutional.

“Opening government meetings with prayer is a centuries-old tradition that goes back to before the founding of our nation and continues to this day before Congress, statehouses, and thousands of local governments across the country,” said Ken Klukowski, Senior Counsel and Director of Strategic Affairs for First Liberty. “The ‘circuit split’ on this issue is creating confusion among government officials across the United States that can only be resolved by a clear and definitive decision by the Supreme Court.”

The Supreme Court has previously approved of the long-standing tradition of “legislative prayer” and its role in solemnizing policymaking sessions, encouraging lawmakers to selflessly seek the greater good, and acknowledging the role that faith plays in the lives of millions of Americans. In both *Marsh v. Chambers* (1983) and *Town of Greece v. Galloway* (2014), the Supreme Court held that prayers offered by private citizens before government meetings are fully consistent with the Constitution and an important part of America’s history and heritage. Whether elected officials may also provide legislative prayers is the question now before the Supreme Court in *Rowan County v. Lund*.

First Liberty also represents [Jackson County, Michigan](#). On September 6, 2017, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit sitting *en banc* voted 9-6 in favor of the Jackson County commissioners’ right to open their meetings with invocations.

To learn more, visit FirstLiberty.org/RowanCounty.

###

About First Liberty Institute

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

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