



## PRESS RELEASE

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### FUTURE OF COUNTY'S PRACTICE OF INVOCATIONS BEFORE PUBLIC MEETINGS HANGS IN THE BALANCE

*First Liberty to defend constitutionality before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit*

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**CINCINNATI**—Today, attorneys from First Liberty Institute defend the longstanding practice of opening government meetings with invocations before the full U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. First Liberty's legal team will argue on behalf of Jackson County, Michigan, in the case of *Bormuth v. County of Jackson*.

"Legislatures at the federal, state, and local levels nationwide have opened their sessions with invocations for more than two centuries, as the Supreme Court has twice recognized in upholding this widely accepted practice," said Ken Klukowski, Senior Counsel at First Liberty. "Jackson County's invocations are fully consistent with the Constitution and the Supreme Court's guidance on this issue."

A local activist sued the commissioners of Jackson County, arguing that their tradition of beginning monthly meetings with an invocation violates the First Amendment. A federal district court judge upheld Jackson County's practice of allowing each of its nine commissioners to have rotating opportunities to deliver a voluntary invocation. A three-judge panel of the Sixth Circuit reversed the lower court's ruling in a 2-1 decision. But the Cincinnati-based appeals court decided to hold a rare *en banc* rehearing of the case, meaning all 15 judges of the court will now hear the case.

In a similar case, First Liberty also represents the commissioners of Rowan County, North Carolina ([Lund v. Rowan County](#)), which was heard *en banc* in March 2017 before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. If the Sixth Circuit and Fourth Circuit issue contradictory rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court could well take up this issue again.

Read more about this case at [FirstLiberty.org/Jackson](http://FirstLiberty.org/Jackson).

#### About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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