



## Press Release

For Immediate Release: October 23, 2017

Contact: Lacey McNiel, [media@firstliberty.org](mailto:media@firstliberty.org)

Direct: 972-941-4453

### **Private Christian School on Offense: High School Football Team Fights Back Against Prohibited Prayer at Championship Game**

*Cambridge Christian School appeals to U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit*

---

**ATLANTA, Ga.**—Friday, October 21, First Liberty Institute and Greenberg Traurig, P.A. filed a [brief](#) with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit on behalf of their client, Cambridge Christian School (CCS)—a private Christian school in Tampa, Florida. In 2015, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) forbade CCS from praying over the loudspeaker prior to the Citrus Bowl ahead of the state championship football game, even though both participating teams were Christian schools and had a tradition of prayer before games. In February, a federal district judge sided with the FHSAA.

“By banning two private Christian schools from praying over the loudspeaker before a football game while allowing other, non-religious messages to come across the same speaker, the FHSAA is telling high school kids that prayer in public is wrong,” said Jeremy Dys, Deputy General Counsel for First Liberty. “We hope the Eleventh Circuit will recognize this for what it is: an assault on the First Amendment and the censorship of religious speech—because it is religious—of two private, Christian schools.”

Prior to the 2015 championship game, CCS asked to continue their tradition of opening the game with prayer over the loudspeaker, a long-standing tradition that allows students on the field and their parents and fans in the stands to unite prior to kickoff. The FHSAA refused, suggesting that because the stadium was city-owned and the FHSAA a state agency, it would violate the Constitution to allow two private Christian schools to pray over a state-owned microphone for less than a minute.

“First, they told religious students that if you want to pray in school, then they have to attend a private, religious school. They did, but even then they have been told they cannot pray in public,” said Dys. “Where else do these religious students have to go? Must they now form their own league in order to exercise the rights guaranteed to them under the Constitution?”

To learn more, visit [FirstLiberty.org/Cambridge](http://FirstLiberty.org/Cambridge).

###

#### **About First Liberty Institute**

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

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel at [media@firstliberty.org](mailto:media@firstliberty.org) or by calling 972-941-4453. First Liberty has access to a ReadyCam studio and can provide video comment on short notice.