



Press Release
For Immediate Release: April 17, 2018
Contact: Lacey McNeil, media@firstliberty.org
Direct: 972-941-4453

First Liberty Urges Dallas City Officials to Protect Religious Liberty of Small Jewish Congregation

Decision on parking regulations for a congregation that does not drive on the Sabbath anticipated Tuesday by Dallas Board of Adjustment

Dallas, Texas—First Liberty Institute and its network attorneys at Winston & Strawn, LLP, today urged city officials on the Dallas Board of Adjustment to grant Congregation Toras Chaim (CTC), a small Orthodox Jewish congregation, a variance from parking regulations in order to continue meeting in a Dallas neighborhood home. At the request of the City of Dallas, CTC applied for a parking variance from the Dallas Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment is scheduled to vote on the parking variance at its next meeting, Tuesday, April 17 at 1:00 pm, in council chamber at the Dallas City Hall.

“Congregation Toras Chaim has been nothing but cooperative with city officials for years,” said Chelsey Youman, Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “But, a small group of city officials on the Board of Adjustment are reluctant to follow the laws that protect this small congregation from unreasonable regulations. This is the last opportunity for city officials to follow the law that protects this small congregation.”

Members of the small Orthodox Jewish congregation do not drive on their Sabbath. Learn more at FirstLiberty.org/TorasChaim.

According to First Liberty, a city ordinance already permits the use of property for religious reasons. In addition, both state and federal law, including the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act (TRFRA), the Texas Constitution, and the U.S. Constitution’s Free Exercise Clause protect this small Jewish congregation from unreasonable regulations that substantially burden the free exercise of their religion.

CTC has been meeting in the home in North Dallas since 2013. In 2015, First Liberty attorneys representing CTC won a lawsuit brought against the congregation by a local Homeowners Association. The court ruled that the congregation had the right to continue meeting in the private home for worship. Since then, CTC has worked with Dallas City officials in efforts to meet city regulations, including obtaining a shared parking agreement with a nearby school.

“The City Attorney’s office has been very cooperative in helping us find a solution that will allow CTC to continue worshiping at its location” added Chad Walker, a partner with Winston & Strawn. “Granting the variance is the last step in reaching that solution. While a handful of neighbors are in opposition the law is on the side of CTC.”

“We only want to do what is right and good for all. I ask these city officials to follow the law and allow our families to continue exercising our right to worship God as prescribed by our faith,” said CTC’s Rabbi Yaakov Rich.

#

About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is 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.