

Supreme Court Rejects California Effort to Force Pro-Life Ministries to Promote Abortion

First Liberty Institute Submitted Amicus Brief on Behalf of Legal Scholars

Plano, Texas—Today, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a California law that required licensed pro-life pregnancy centers to advertise state-subsidized abortions in a written opinion that echoes the Free Speech arguments set forth in First Liberty’s amicus brief. In a [5-4 decision](#) in *National Institute of Life Advocates v. Becerra*, the Justices made clear that viewpoint-based compelled speech violates the Free Speech clause of the Constitution’s First Amendment.

“Americans should never be forced by their government to express a message that violates with their religious beliefs,” said Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO for First Liberty Institute. “The Supreme Court, once again, reminded the California legislature that the Constitution actually means what it says when it protects the free speech of its citizens.”

In 2015, the California legislature passed the so-called “Reproductive FACT Act” requiring pro-life pregnancy care centers providing licensed medical services to post prominent advertisements for state-subsidized abortion, regardless of the religious beliefs of the pregnancy centers.

First Liberty Institute submitted an amicus brief on behalf of 23 scholars from across the country stating that California violated the First Amendment by targeting pro-life pregnancy clinics with regulations specifically designed to force pregnancy centers to advertise abortion despite their religious objections.

Among the 23 law professors and legal scholars represented on the brief are Helen Alvare, Gerard Bradley, Richard Duncan, Richard Epstein, Thomas Farr, Stephen Presser, O. Carter Snead, and others.

As Lea Patterson, Judicial Fellow at First Liberty Institute [wrote](#) at the time of oral arguments, “Forcing pro-life pregnancy care centers to promote a message contrary to their viewpoint is a clear violation of the U.S. Constitution. Compelled speech like this is just as impermissible as censored speech: the freedom to speak and to refrain from speaking are two sides of the same coin.”

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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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