



*(Coach Kennedy on the Bremerton High School football field.  
Photo credit: First Liberty Institute. May be republished.  
Access full resolution photos at [CoachKennedyFacts.com](http://CoachKennedyFacts.com) under “Photos and Videos.”)*

## **Coach Kennedy to Supreme Court: Run Reverse on Ninth Circuit Decision Preventing Coach Taking a Knee**

*First Liberty attorneys ask Court to review school district’s decision to fire coach because of his silent 15-second prayer*

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Attorneys for First Liberty Institute and Kirkland & Ellis LLP today filed a petition for writ of certiorari with the Supreme Court of the United States on behalf of former high school football coach Joe Kennedy, asking the nine Justices to reverse a lower court [decision](#) that allowed a school district to fire him because fans and students could see him take a knee in silent prayer after football games.

A copy of the petition can be found [here](#).

“Banning all coaches from praying just because they can be seen is wrong and contradicts the Constitution,” said Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty. “We must protect the right of every American to engage in private religious expression, including praying in public, without fear of getting fired.”

Last year, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit [held](#) that a school district in Washington state could fire Coach Kennedy because he silently prayed alone for 15 to 30 seconds following football games. Coach Kennedy’s case has received national attention and support from political and religious leaders including [President Trump](#) and [Franklin Graham](#), and former NFL players [Steve Largent](#), and [Chad Hennings](#).

Paul Clement, former U.S. Solicitor General, partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP and First Liberty network attorney, said, “We hope the Supreme Court will review the Ninth Circuit’s decision. This is an important case that could determine whether teachers and coaches lose their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse gates.”

To learn more about the case, visit [CoachKennedyFacts.com](http://CoachKennedyFacts.com).

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### **About First Liberty Institute**

[First Liberty Institute](http://FirstLibertyInstitute.org) 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.

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