



News Release
For Immediate Release: 11.14.18
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New York Court of Appeals Protects Religious Liberty of Orthodox Jewish Congregations

Animal rights activists had sought to prevent longstanding religious practice

Albany, NY—The Court of Appeals of the State of New York today rejected demands by animal rights groups seeking to prevent Orthodox Jewish communities in New York City from participating in a millennia-old religious ritual known as Kaporos. First Liberty Institute and the law firm Vinson & Elkins LLP filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case on behalf of Agudath Israel of America to defend the right of Orthodox Jews to practice Kaporos.

“We’re grateful that New York’s highest court rejected this effort to force government officials to ban a thousand-year-old religious tradition,” said Roger Byron, Senior Counsel to First Liberty. “The First Amendment protects the peaceful religious practices of all faiths. This is a victory for all Americans who value our constitutional freedoms.”

Kaporos is a sacred religious ceremony performed by Orthodox Jewish congregations, where the atonement of sins is contemplated through prayer and the kosher and humane killing of a chicken. The ceremony takes place during the holiest days of the Jewish calendar.

“Today’s decision is a tremendous victory for our clients and the Orthodox Jewish community in New York,” said Jason Levine, the Vinson & Elkins partner who led his firm’s work on the brief.

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About First Liberty Institute

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

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