



News Release
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Religious Liberty Law Firm Files Appeal on Behalf of Idaho Family After Judge Overrules Jury Verdict on Christmas Display
First Liberty Institute asserts verdict judge overruled should be upheld after jury found religious discrimination by HOA

Coeur d’Alene, ID—First Liberty Institute is appealing to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit on behalf of Jeremy and Kristy Morris after a judge overruled a jury verdict finding the Idaho man’s HOA discriminated against him based on his religion. First Liberty is asking the Ninth Circuit to reinstate the jury’s verdict.

Read the notice of appeal [here](#).

“The jury found that the Homeowners’ Association discriminated against the Morris family by repeatedly attempting to shut down the family’s Christmas display and childrens’ charity fundraiser,” Jeremy Dys, Deputy General Counsel for First Liberty Institute said. “The jury in this case recognized clear religious hostility by the HOA—there was no good reason for a judge to overrule them.”

Jeremy and Kristy Morris hosted a Christmas display at their home in the Hayden, Idaho-area, asking visitors for donations to charities that assist children with cancer and children who have suffered abuse and neglect. In 2014, when the Morrises planned to move to a new home, they let the West Hayden States First Addition Homeowners Association know that they would have a Christmas display.

In response, the HOA wrote, “I am somewhat hesitant in bringing up the fact that some of our residents are non-Christians or of another faith and I don’t even want to think of the problems that could bring up” and “we do not wish to . . . fill our neighborhood with the hundreds of people and possible undesirables.”

After a trial, an Idaho jury found that the Morrises were discriminated against on the basis of religion during and after the purchase of their home, and awarded them \$60,000 in compensatory damages and \$15,000 in punitive damages. The jury also found that the letter sent by the HOA showed “preference that a non-religious individual” should purchase the home. However, the judge overruled the jury’s verdict, imposed an injunction preventing the Morrises from decorating their home for Christmas, and imposed thousands of dollars of attorney’s fees on the Morrises.

“Families should be encouraged to raise money for an abused or neglected children’s charity by inviting their community to see their Christmas display, not be punished by their HOA for it,” added Dys.

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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.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.