



**News Release**  
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**California Judge Fines Jewish Rabbi Over \$6,000 for Reporting  
Vandalism Against Synagogue to Police**  
*Judge imposes fine on the eve of Passover*

**Van Nuys, CA**—A California judge today fined an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi over six thousand dollars for reporting the vandalism of his synagogue to the police. The decision comes just prior to one of the holiest weeks of the year for the Jewish community.

“This is an outrageous decision that penalizes a Rabbi for simply reporting a crime that he witnessed,” said Stephanie Taub, Senior Counsel to First Liberty. “The Rabbi made a good faith report to police about a crime he saw taking place on his property. This decision empowers vandals to continue to interfere with sacred religious practices without fear of accountability.”

First Liberty attorneys plan to appeal today’s decision.

In October of 2016, a band of activists stormed onto the Hebrew Discovery Center synagogue, after the synagogue performed an ancient religious ceremony involving the kosher and humane killing of chickens. The vandals trespassed, stole electronics, and caused thousands of dollars in damage to the property. The Rabbi witnessed the vandalism, catching some of the disturbance on video, and reported the incident to the police. One person in the group was charged with vandalism, theft, and trespass. The case was eventually dismissed, because prosecutors did not have enough evidence to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Afterward, the activist brought a case against the Rabbi for reporting her to the police and a California judge just awarded her over \$6,000.

Cases based on reporting crimes to the police are generally disfavored under California law, because the state wants to encourage those who are the victims of crimes to freely communicate with law enforcement.

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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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