



News Release
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**California Judge Reverses Fine Imposed Against Jewish Rabbi
for Reporting Vandalism Against Synagogue to Police**
Synagogue damaged again over weekend by vandals

Van Nuys, CA—A California judge reversed an earlier decision to fine Orthodox Jewish Rabbi Netanel Louie over six thousand dollars for reporting the vandalism of his synagogue to the police. In a separate incident this past Saturday evening, vandals threw paint and bricks at the synagogue.

“The judge’s decision is just and protects Rabbi Louie from being penalized 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. We are grateful for this decision. We will continue to assist Rabbi Louie as police investigate the most recent vandalism against his synagogue.”

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 a chicken. 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 awarded her over \$6,000. Fortunately, the decision was reversed on appeal. The Rabbi was well within his rights to call the police on the suspected vandal.

Police are investigating the most recent vandalism, which took place Saturday evening, as a potential hate crime.

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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.

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