

Delaware Town Adds Nativity Scene to City Christmas Display in Response to Lawsuit by Local Religious Group

First Liberty Institute represents group that was prohibited from placing Nativity on Rehoboth Beach, Delaware Public Property

Rehoboth Beach, DE—The city of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, last week added a Nativity scene to the town Christmas display after a local Knights of Columbus council sued the city for prohibiting it from displaying a crèche, or Nativity, on city property in 2018 and 2019 because the crèche is a religious symbol. The Knights are represented by First Liberty Institute.

“We’re pleased the city has responded to the lawsuit and the preliminary injunction motion by returning a crèche to the community’s holiday display, and by assuring the court and the Knights that it will administer a lawful display policy,” said Roger Byron, Senior Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “We look forward to more favorable results as the litigation continues.”

For decades, a free-standing crèche has been part of the Christmas holiday tradition in Rehoboth Beach. The primary location for Christmas displays is the area around the city bandstand and adjacent boardwalk, and traditional displays include a crèche, a Christmas tree, holiday lights and light displays, and a large Santa’s House. But, in 2018 and 2019, city officials prohibited the Knights from including a crèche as part of the display because it is a religious symbol. The Knights filed a lawsuit against the city in June 2020 claiming religious discrimination.

In November 2020, the city adopted a policy prohibiting all private holiday displays, religious and secular, on public property. First Liberty argued, however, that the new policy was unconstitutional under the First Amendment. In December the city again revised its policy and also added a city-owned crèche to its multi-faceted holiday display on the bandstand.

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](https://www.firstliberty.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.

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