



**News Release**  
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## **Federal Court Censors Chaplain-led Ceremonial Invocations Prior to Texas State Court Proceedings**

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**Montgomery County, TX**—A federal district court today ruled in favor of an anti-religion activist group’s lawsuit against First Liberty Institute client Judge Wayne Mack, a Texas Justice of the Peace, because he allows chaplains from multiple faith groups to offer invocations at the start of his court sessions.

“Judge Mack is following a long tradition of opening courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, with a ceremonial invocation,” said Justin Butterfield, Deputy General Counsel to First Liberty. “We disagree with the court’s decision, and we look forward to appealing this decision to the Fifth Circuit.”

Mack, whose duties include serving as a coroner for Montgomery County, created a volunteer chaplaincy program to aid members of the community while he conducts independent death investigations. In his role as Justice of the Peace, Judge Mack allows the multi-faith, volunteer chaplains to open his courtroom ceremonies with a brief invocation and the pledge of allegiance in order to honor their service. The chaplaincy program includes leaders from multiple faiths, including Christian, Sunni Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu religious leaders.

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### **About First Liberty Institute**

[First Liberty Institute](https://www.firstliberty.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](mailto:media@firstliberty.org) or by calling 972-941-4453.