



*(Attorney General Dave Yost pictured Thursday with Pastor Chris Avell while visiting Dad's Place.)*

**Breaking: Ohio AG Dave Yost Files Brief in Support of Dad's Place Church, Urges Court to Stay Decision to "Prevent Imminent Harm"**  
*State judge issued ruling preventing church's overnight ministry despite freezing temperatures.*

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**Bryan, OH**—Late yesterday, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost submitted a friend-of-the-court brief supporting Dad's Place, a Bryan, Ohio church keeping its doors open 24-hours a day, seven days a week that has been harassed by city officials for allegedly violating the city's fire code. First Liberty Institute and the law firms Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP and Spengler Nathanson PLL filed the motion to stay a ruling by Judge J.T. Stelzer of the Williams County Court of Common Pleas, preventing Dad's Place from allowing people to seek temporary shelter overnight.

AG Yost's brief can be read [here](#). The Church's motion for a stay is available [here](#).

Jeremy Dys, Senior Counsel at First Liberty Institute said, "We are grateful for AG Yost's leadership in defense of religious liberty for all Ohioans. He clearly understands the importance of respecting the free exercise of religion even when trying to enforce town ordinances. We are determined to continue this litigation on appeal, but are encouraged that we can do so with the support of leaders like AG Yost."

Gen. Yost's brief, filed in Williams County Court of Common Pleas late Thursday evening, suggests a stay is necessary "to both prevent imminent harm to Ohio citizens who are relying

tonight on the warmth of the first floor of Dad's Place to escape the cold, and to appropriately litigate the Ohio constitutional rights potentially implicated by the City of Bryan's enforcement of its regulations."

In March 2023, Dad's Place began operating its ministry 24-hours a day to serve the most vulnerable in its community. For months, Dad's place did so without incident, even receiving people brought to the church by the Bryan Police Department who had nowhere to go. However, in November 2023 as winter began in Northern Ohio, Bryan city officials issued an ultimatum to the church: cease operating 24-hours a day or face crippling penalties. After Dad's Place refused to force those within its care out onto the streets, city officials began engaging in a campaign to harass, intimidate, and shut down Dad's Place. To date, Mayor Schlade and officials have criminally charged Pastor Avell 19 times, threatened to criminally charge the church's landlord, used law enforcement officials to needlessly harass and humiliate Dad's Place and its congregants, and more.

Attorneys for Avell plan to appeal Judge Steltzer's decision immediately.

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### **About First Liberty Institute**

[First Liberty Institute](#) 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.

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