



## News Release

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### **Federal Court Urged to End City of Santa Ana's Discriminatory Action Against Chinese- and Taiwanese-American Church**

*The church has been barred for two years from using their facility for religious services.*

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**Santa Ana, CA—** Today, during a hearing in the United States District Court for the Central District of California, attorneys urged the court to issue a preliminary injunction to stop the city of Santa Ana, California from preventing Anchor Stone church from using their facilities for religious services. Anchor Stone is represented by First Liberty Institute and the law firm O'Melveny & Myers. The U.S. Department of Justice joined attorneys for the plaintiff at the hearing to argue in favor of granting the preliminary injunction after filing a [statement of interest](#) in support of the motion.

"It is indisputable that the city has severely burdened Anchor Stone's ability to engage in religious exercise," said Jeremy Dys, Senior Counsel for First Liberty Institute. "Under federal law, the City of Santa Ana must treat religious land uses the same as any other. The city's repeated efforts to prevent churches and religious institutions from engaging in their religious missions cannot continue."

"It's favoritism and discrimination when the city grants a permit to one church across the street from the location where Anchor Stone was denied," said Timothy Durst, partner at O'Melveny & Myers. "The First Amendment and federal law protect the right of churches to operate free from unreasonable and intrusive government interference."

Anchor Stone is a Chinese- and Taiwanese-American Christian church that endeavors to spread the gospel to others in Santa Ana and throughout Orange County. Since its inception in 2018, the church has grown from an in-home prayer group to a 50-member congregation needing additional space. With assurance from the city that there would be no obstacles for using the property they intended to purchase for religious assembly, they proceeded with the purchase. It was only after closing on the property that the city rejected Anchor Stone's CUP. Since the denial, the property sat vacant for two years and the church has been unable to renovate or hold worship services in it.

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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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