

RUTHERFORD INSTITUTE

2009 CASE SUMMARY REPORT

The following is a sampling of Rutherford Institute cases which have made their way through the courts this past year.

United States Supreme Court

Borden v. Township of East Brunswick (NJ): High school football coach was threatened with termination for silently bowing his head as a sign of respect while his student players offer a pre-game prayer.

Busch v. Culbertson School (PA): Mother was prevented from reading her son's favorite Bible verse during a classroom program about the child's favorite book.

McComb v. Clark County School Dist. (NV): High school valedictorian had her microphone unplugged after she spoke about the role faith played in her success.

Nurre v. Whitehead (WA): Wind ensemble was prevented from playing an instrumental arrangement of "Ave Maria" at graduation due to fears that it was religious in nature.

Turner v. City Council of the City of Fredericksburg (VA): A Virginia city councilman was prohibited from ending his prayers with three small words—"in Jesus' name."

Litigation Cases

Bernstein v. Twp. of Freehold (NJ): Rabbi was fined under zoning ordinance for gathering at home with friends and family to pray.

Bowman v. Dept. of Defense (OH): Retired military chaplain, required to do community service in order to claim full pension, was denied full benefits because religious activities are disqualified.

Dobrich v. Indian River Sch. Dist. (DE): School board was sued over its practice of opening meetings with prayer.

First Congregational Church of Hamilton v. Hamilton, Mass. (MA): Historic commission denied church a permit to build fellowship hall adjacent to its historic sanctuary.

Frantz v. Gress (PA): Street preacher was cited for passing out religious tracts to passersby.

Griffith v. Uggetti (MT): High school valedictorian was prohibited from speaking about life lessons learned from God in graduation speech.

King v. Cardinal Health (VA): Pastor who worked part-time as delivery driver for pharmacy was terminated for his inability to work on Sundays.

Meeker v. Rockwell Collins (IA): Employee was terminated after voicing religious objection to having to attend diversity training seminar involving homosexuality.

Miska v. U.S.: Vietnam War veteran was arrested for distributing memorial poppies near the Vietnam War Memorial.

Riback v. City of Las Vegas (NV): Jewish police officer was denied religious accommodation and prohibited from wearing short beard and yarmulke.

Rhoades v. Penn-Harris-Madison School District (IN): A 15-year-old student was subjected to a mental screening exam at school without her parents' knowledge or consent.

Sloan v. West Va. Dept. of Nat. Res. (WV): Political campaigner was prevented from obtaining signed petitions at a state park for upcoming state election.

United States v. Robert James and Francis Mahoney (DC): Pro-life protesters were arrested for voicing concerns over abortion during confirmation hearing of Sonia Sotomayor.

Weinstein v. Ammerman, et al. (TX): Military chaplains were sued for offering imprecatory prayers asking God to protect the weak and faithful from the strong and wicked.

Pre-Litigation Cases

Bible Believers Bapt. Ch. v. Canyon Ch. of Commerce (TX): Chamber of Commerce prohibited Church from distributing tracts at its booth at the town's biannual Fair.

Boruff v. Menard, Inc. (IA): General laborer was terminated for requesting Sundays off from work in keeping with his religious beliefs.

Keezor v. Home Depot, Inc. (FL): Home Depot employee was fired for wearing a "One Nation Under God" button to work.

Kinney v. U.S. Dept. of Vet. Affairs (NC): Volunteers at veteran's hospital were ordered not to discuss religion with patients.

Manchester v. Merced City Sch. Dist. (CA): Third grader was prevented from reading Bible during free reading time at school because teacher considered it disrespectful to other students.

Monaco v. Fla. Dept. of Transp. (FL): State troopers prevented evangelist from handing out religious tracts at a rest area on Interstate 75 in Central Florida.

Quest v. Virginia Dept. of Corrections (VA): Virginia Department of Corrections prevented "Books Behind Bars" from providing free dictionaries, Bibles and other religious materials to prisoners in Virginia jails.

Wingspread Prison Ministries v. Okla. Dept. of Corrections (OK): Prison outreach ministry was ordered to cease sending Bibles to prisoners.

Incidents Across the Nation

ARIZONA

- Teacher was informed that she broke the law when she talked to a student's parent about Christianity while on school property.

COLORADO

- Fourth grader was prevented from choosing Jesus as his hero for a school assignment.

FLORIDA

- Author had her books on marriage banned at a public school because they mention God.

ILLINOIS

- Christian club that meets at a high school was ordered to remove the word "Jesus" from posters promoting the club.

IOWA

- Employee was fired for refusing to work on Sundays because of his religious beliefs about Sabbath.

KANSAS

- Hospital employee was informed by her supervisor that she is not allowed to discuss the Christian religion with patients even outside of the hospital.

MASSACHUSETTS

- Teacher wants to end speech at honor society invocation with the words "God Speed."

MINNESOTA

- Life sciences teacher was terminated for talking about the irony of abortion in his classroom.
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation center was ordered to remove the Lord's Prayer from the closing of their meditation gatherings.
- Christian woman was repeatedly told by security officers that she could not talk to someone about religion in a shopping mall.
- Patient was informed that talking about his Christian faith was off-limits at the hospital.

NEBRASKA

- State employee was ordered to remove a Bible verse (Ephesians 2:8) from her work emails.

NEVADA

- Second grader was told several times by a teacher that she cannot have any religious discussions in school.
- Third grader who wrote in her class journal that she liked the month of December because it is Jesus' birthday was told that she could not write about religion in school.

NEW JERSEY

- Resident was told that she couldn't advertise a church event with flyers to local students because of the religious affiliation.

NEW MEXICO

- Christian Club at a middle school was forced to remove the words "Holy Bible" and "Word of God" from flyers promoting the club.

NEW YORK

- School bus driver is facing discipline for speaking about Christianity to a student.
- Student was prohibited from putting up posters at school that say "One Nation Under God."

NORTH CAROLINA

- A volunteer minister and season passer was told he can't discuss Christianity with people in a theme park.

OHIO

- Resident was ordered by management of a mobile home park where she lives to remove Bible messages painted on the side of her mobile home.

OKLAHOMA

- High school student was prevented from wearing a cardboard sign to school displaying a Bible verse.

OREGON

- Employee was fired for praying in the workplace.
- Shopper was ordered to cease talking about Christianity or he would be banned from a local store.
- Church is not being allowed to use a school building for worship services although other non-religious organizations are permitted use of the building.

PENNSYLVANIA

- Christian high school valedictorian prevented from giving graduation speech over concerns about the possible content of speech.

SOUTH CAROLINA

- Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) students were ordered to remove a Bible verse about prayer from posters they had created to promote the "See You at the Pole" prayer rally.

TENNESSEE

- Hospital worker was reprimanded for saying "God bless you" to patients when he delivers their meal trays.

TEXAS

- Employee upset because employer now requires that the tree they put up in the workplace be called a "holiday" tree instead of a "Christmas" tree.
- Artist is being prevented from erecting a 77 foot cross in a sculpture garden located on private property.

VIRGINIA

- Student threatened with failing grade for raising a religious objection to class assignment on lesbian/gay culture.

WEST VIRGINIA

- Student threatened with suspension for wearing Christian t-shirt to school.

WISCONSIN

- Employee was asked to sign paperwork agreeing not to share his faith in Christ at work.
- Fallen soldier's memorial stone was being threatened with removal because his last letter and testimony containing the words "God," "Jesus" and "Bible" are displayed.

MISCELLANEOUS

- School janitor was threatened with termination for wearing a t-shirt to work that proclaimed, "Real men love Jesus."
- Eighth grader was prevented from doing an independent learning project on Genesis.