



The Alliance Defense Fund has been involved in hundreds of cases in defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and traditional values. The stories below are just a small sampling of the ongoing battle to protect our religious liberty, reclaim what we have lost, and shape a future where religious freedom is affirmed.

THE CASE OF THE PINK TRIANGLE **THE CASE OF THE SCHOOL SAFE ZONE**

When Neil and Kathleen Houde learned that their daughter had been subjected to a lecture promoting homosexual behavior by her English teacher, they wrote their local school board to express their objections to the school district's "Pink Triangle" program which provides homosexual "mentors" to impressionable high school students.

The English teacher headed this program and provided "sexual counseling" to students at the local high school.

When their daughter tried to share her Christian views on homosexual behavior with the teacher, she was chastised and told that she was "narrow minded" and "wrong."

After the teacher learned about the Houdes' complaint and news of it appeared in the local newspaper, the teacher filed suit against them, **seeking more than \$15,000 for "emotional distress, embarrassment, anxiety, mental suffering, humiliation, and other damages."**

Homosexual activists got wind of the lawsuit and through an Internet campaign, poured thousands of dollars into the legal fight against the Houdes. It was their hope to intimidate and silence other Christians who might take a stand against pro-homosexual propaganda at school.

But because of the publicity and by God's grace, the school board reviewed the "safe zone" policy and voted to discontinue it. The lawsuit was dismissed.

THE CASE OF THE SIMPLE DISPLAY

A pro-life group at the University of Houston called the “Pro-Life Cougars” wanted to put up a display that affirmed the right to life for the unborn, infirm, and the elderly. They requested to put up their display in Butler Plaza, which had been designated by the university as a public forum and had been previously used by Planned Parenthood.

However, when they asked permission in October 2001 to set up the display, they were denied by the Assistant Vice-President of Student Development and the Dean of Students. The group was told that the display was “potentially disruptive” and they would have to set up at one of two alternate sites that were too small to house it and unlikely to be seen by many students.

ADF chief counsel Benjamin Bull, along with ADF allied attorney Jim Spencer, intervened successfully on behalf of the Pro-Life Cougars, stating that the university’s actions had infringed on the group’s First Amendment rights. While the university lost at every trial level, it continued to appeal the ruling.

Meanwhile, the Pro-Life Cougars were allowed to put up their display in Butler Plaza...and at least one life was saved as a result.

One of the Pro-Life Cougars published the following letter in the student newspaper:

“People say that nobody’s mind will change from the pictures [at the display]. I would like to share with you a story of a girl I met during the days that the [pro-life] display was here. She came to me mad. I could see that she was hurt and I kept asking questions to find out what made her mad about the display. I then found out she was 10 weeks pregnant. You see, she had an appointment at Planned Parenthood that Friday for an abortion and she felt bad. She soon fell into my arms crying. She confessed that she was being stingy and didn’t know that at 10 weeks pregnant it looks like that (as she pointed to the picture of a 10 week old fetus). I gave her my phone number and she gave me hers. She walked away thanking me for all my help. She thanked me...for what? All I did was listen and reach out a hand to a woman that needed to talk...The fact that one little baby was saved is enough reason for me to continue even though it is tough...We think that if given all the correct information, most women will make the right choice, just as that young lady that I met that day did.”

On June 11, 2003, the university finally settled and a precedent-setting and another life-saving victory for religious freedom had been won. ADF chief counsel Benjamin Bull said: “Universities are not black holes where only orthodox (left-wing) views are allowed to shine...These students had the courage to litigate for their rights. They won everything that they asked for and then some. This should be a message to other public universities that restrict pro-life speech [and the Gospel] on campuses.”

If your religious group is experiencing discrimination on a university campus, please call us at 877-TELL-ADF or go to www.adfradio.org to request “The Truth About Free Speech on University Campuses.”

THE CASE OF THE SENIOR CENTER

For twenty years, senior citizens at the Balch Springs (Texas) Senior Center have used the facility for social programs and recreational events. A group of Christian seniors had also gathered – without government interference -- at the center to sing gospel songs and hear the Word of God from a retired pastor. These seniors also quietly say a word of thanks to the Lord when they receive their meals at the center. All prayers and participation in the worship service are voluntary – no one is coerced into praying or attending.

Then things changed. In August 2003, the city of Balch Springs enacted a new policy that stated that all mealtime prayers, gospel music, and “religious messages” cease immediately. No other group was censored, only Christians.

Liberty Legal Institute, with ADF’s backing, jumped in to defend the right of these seniors to worship God at the center. Liberty Legal immediately sent a demand letter to the city – which was ignored -- to reverse its policy or face a lawsuit on the grounds that they had denied the seniors their First Amendment right to worship freely. The seniors were willing to take a stand. Some began to very peacefully picket the center to protest the actions of the city.

Then the city fired the center’s events planner and bus driver – cutting off the seniors’ access to museum outings, the state fair, and funerals of their friends. They even refused to allow the seniors to go to the drug store to get their prescriptions filled!

As promised, Liberty Legal – led by ally Kelly Shackelford -- filed a lawsuit against Balch Springs – alleging multiple violations of both the Texas and U.S. Constitutions. The city’s response? They threatened to stop the meal service to the seniors if they did not drop the lawsuit!

The situation had gotten so bad that the United States Department of Justice got involved – opening an investigation of the city’s policy.

Finally, at the federal courthouse in Dallas, Balch Springs agreed to end its discriminatory policy. In addition, the judge ruled that the seniors were to receive monetary damages from the city.