

New York Attorney General Seeks to Silence Pro-Life Christians' Free Speech

Liberty Counsel filed a motion to dismiss a federal lawsuit, filed by New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman, to shut down the pro-life speech of Christians who regularly counsel and preach on public sidewalks outside a Planned Parenthood abortion facility in Jamaica, New York.

Liberty Counsel represents one of the defendants, Scott Fitchett Jr., a pre-K teacher who spends his Saturdays preaching outside the facility "to persuade women to change their minds about seeking an abortion by communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Liberty Counsel's filing includes Fitchett's opposition to the attorney general's motion for an immediate injunction to stop Fitchett's sidewalk preaching of the gospel.

The attorney general's lawsuit is based on the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE) and similar New York laws. Enacted by Congress to prevent actual violence and physical obstruction of abortion facility entrances, Attorney General Schneiderman is using FACE to shut down pro-life speech. Schneiderman's disdain for free speech in general, and the pro-life message in particular, was made clear in his press conference announcing the lawsuit, where he said, "We are not a nation where you can choose your point of view," and that pro-life Christians "run their mouths" with "unlawful, un-American rhetoric."

"It is obvious that Attorney General Schneiderman abhors the Christian, pro-life message of our client and is willing to twist the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act to silence any opposition to abortion," said Roger Gannam, Liberty

Counsel's Assistant Vice President of Legal Affairs. "It is inexcusable for the highest legal officer of the State of New York to declare war on free speech and the pro-life message, and we hope the court will turn back this assault on our most cherished liberties." {eo}

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