

Appeals Court Dismissal Only Means Open Door to New LawsUIT for Churches Against Illinois Governor

While the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the federal lawsuit of Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church and Logos Baptist Ministries against Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker, it left the door open for a new lawsuit if the governor reimposes his unconstitutional executive orders against these churches by restricting in-person worship services “in response to new developments in the pandemic.”

Under Gov. Pritzker’s previous executive orders, churches could have an unlimited number of people for nonreligious activities to feed, shelter and provide social services, which includes unemployment or disability counseling. However, religious gatherings, in the same church with the same people, were limited to 10.

The governor’s restrictions were finally removed in May 2020 when Liberty Counsel filed a petition for an injunction pending appeal at the Supreme Court. As a result, the district court dismissed the case as moot, even though the governor argued that he should be able to impose his discriminatory orders again. However, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Tandon v. Newsom* and *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo* that neither the easing, amending, modifying nor expiration of challenged COVID-19 restrictions moots a plaintiff’s claims if the governor retains the authority to reinstate the discriminatory restrictions at any time.

Last year, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot engaged in mob-like thuggery against Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church when it

began to meet in-person again. The aldermen sent letters to the neighbors of the church instructing them not to park on the street from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Even though the church has its own private parking and their members don't park on the street, the mayor ordered "No Parking" signs and towed the neighbors' cars along the streets for nine blocks, hoping to get them mad at the church. When Mayor Lightfoot realized this tactic did not work, she stationed police on a Sunday night at the entrance to the private parking lot of Elim Romanian Pentecostal Church, refusing to allow anyone to park. The police trespassed on private property and interfered with private contractual rights, not to mention grossly violating the Constitution. The city of Chicago also even threatened to bulldoze the building.

Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, "Our lawsuit on behalf of the churches resulted in the removal of all restrictions on churches and places of worship after we took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The High Court has made clear that the government may not impose discriminatory restrictions on churches and places of worship. Thanks to our litigation, churches have been free from unconstitutional restrictions since May 2020. If the current or future governor returns to these unconstitutional restrictions, we will again vigorously challenge them." {eo}

For the original article, visit our content partners at .

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.