

Atheists vs. Christian Cheerleaders: Battle Over Bible Banners May Head to Texas High Court

The battle over Bible banners at football games in one Texas town could be heading to that state's Supreme Court.

Cheerleaders at an east Texas high school are once again defending the right to display Bible verses at football games. Their bold stand has earned national attention and placed them right in the middle of a heated free speech battle.

In this small town of Kountze, Texas, there is overwhelming support for the hometown cheerleaders who simply believe if God is for them, no one can be against them.

Just one look at the banners the Kountze football players run through just before a big game tells you that the Kountze high school cheerleaders are not typical teenage girls.

The cheerleaders began writing Bible verses on them last fall.

"We're just all Christians and believe the Bible is from God and so if it's from God, why not?" one cheerleader said. "That's what we were thinking and it's a positive message and it's uplifting."

The girl's zeal for God's Word was so contagious it not only inspired their own football team, it caused the opposing teams to want to do the same thing. They also began writing scriptures on their banners.

But an atheist group filed a complaint with the superintendent and said Bible verses should not be displayed at football Texas Association of School Board Lawyers agreed.

The cheerleaders said that was a violation of free speech and filed a countersuit.

The case went to court, and the cheerleaders won a temporary injunction. The judge ruled they could continue to write scriptures on the banners for the rest of the football season.

The School Board brought the issue before the community to hear their opinions. The cheerleaders stood up for their faith once again and received overwhelming support from the local community.

"They're good kids, they've been raised right. They know what they believe and they weren't afraid to stand up and say what they believe and to take whatever came with it," Mama Jack, a local restaurant owner, said.

Cheerleaders: small-town heroes

Kountze is a small town in East Texas with a population of a few thousand. The town is known for having the only pair of married armadillos. However, the cheerleaders now have replaced the armadillos.

Even Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott has taken notice.

"When you have the courage of your convictions, you can be a messenger for the entire world," he said. "These are girls who one day were cheerleaders and they were transformed into community leaders. Texas and this country are better and prouder because of them."

Meanwhile the cheerleaders said, "We're still the same people we always were. This has just helped like our football boys and us come closer to each other. But I mean everything is still the same at school. We're all still close. Nobody argues. Like we hardly talk about it anymore."