

Obama Cannot Monitor Newsrooms, FCC Says in First Amendment Victory

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which focuses on constitutional law, said Friday that a decision by the Obama administration to pull the plug on a proposal for putting monitors in newsrooms is a significant victory for the **First Amendment** and the freedom of the press.

Under fire from a growing number of Americans, the Federal Communications Commission released a statement announcing it is pulling the plug on the proposal, saying some of the questions directed to members of the news media “overstepped the bounds of what is required.” The reversal comes as the ACLJ heard from more than 85,000 Americans in just several days opposing the intrusive move.

“This is significant victory for the First Amendment and the freedom of the press,” says Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the ACLJ. “The American people spoke out and sent a persuasive message to the Obama administration: The federal government has no business interfering in the news business—putting monitors in newsrooms in an attempt to control the media’s message.

“By shutting down this proposal, the FCC took the only action it could. We will now remain vigilant to ensure that the FCC follows through on its pledge to refrain from putting monitors in America’s newsrooms.”

The FCC came under fire for considering a proposal that would send government researchers into newsrooms to determine how news organizations decide which stories to run. The proposal prompted one FCC commissioner to express concern that this could be used in “pressuring media organizations into covering

certain stories.”

The ACLJ is on the front lines of defending the constitutional rights of Americans—including representing 41 organizations in a federal lawsuit challenging unconstitutional targeting by the IRS.