

Ohio Christian Schools Win Against State COVID Restrictions

The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals has granted an injunction pending appeal to allow a Christian school to resume in-person activities on campus.

Monclova Christian Academy, which is a ministry of Monclova Road Baptist Church, is a private Christian school in Monclova, Ohio.

Effective Dec. 4, the Toledo County Health Department issued a resolution closing every school in the county—public, private and parochial—for grades 7-12. However, in the same county, gyms, tanning salons, office buildings and a large casino remained open. Monclova Christian Academy filed suit, arguing that the closure of their schools amounts to a prohibition of religious exercise in violation of the First Amendment.

“Providing religious education is a core part of the religious freedom protected by the First Amendment, and the Toledo County Health Department’s Resolution plainly burdens such freedom,” says Liberty Counsel founder and Chairman Mat Staver. “This is another win for religious freedom as a result of the Supreme Court’s ruling in favor of synagogues and churches.”

The 6th Circuit rejected the Health Department’s discriminatory ban in light of the Supreme Court’s decision granting an injunction for churches and synagogues in *New York in Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo* and *Agudath Israel v. Cuomo*. In that case, the high court held unequivocally that COVID-19 restrictions “cannot be viewed as neutral because they single out houses of worship for especially harsh treatment.”

The court also noted that the schools employed “strict social distancing and hygiene standards” and that “little in-school transmission has been documented,” and the resolution treats the schools less favorably than it does “comparable secular facilities.” {eoa}