

School District Tells Coach: 'If You Talk to God, You're Fired'

First Liberty Institute attorney Michael Berry said Bremerton High School in Washington State picked on the wrong Marine.

First Liberty is representing Joe Kennedy, a Marine and former assistant football coach at the local high school. Kennedy was fired in 2015 after he took a knee to pray after a football game.

"The (district told him) if you talk to God you're fired," Berry said on the **Todd Starnes Radio Show**.

Since 2008, Kennedy had quietly taken a knee after every football game to honor a covenant he made with God.

"That prayer would be by itself, silent or very quiet, and no more than 15 or 30 seconds," Berry said. "That happened for seven years without a single complaint or issue, but as we all know, no good deed goes unpunished."

Fearing a potential lawsuit from atheists or secularists, the school district ordered Coach Kennedy to stop praying. He was told he could not even bow his head or do anything that would give the impression that he was praying to God.

When he refused to comply, the beloved coach was fired.

"When the government puts you in a position where you have to choose between your faith and your job, that's something that no American should ever have to experience," Berry said.

On Monday First Liberty Institute filed a petition for review of Coach Kennedy's case with the United States Supreme Court. Berry believes it could be a precedent-setting case.

"This could define whether public school employees are going to lose their First Amendment rights just by virtue of being a public school employee," Berry said on the radio show.

Kennedy is only asking for is his job back, so he can start doing what he loves again.

"The U.S. Supreme Court is pretty much the end of the road when it comes to appealing a legal ruling," Berry said. "We've asked the court to overturn the decision of the Ninth Circuit and of the District Court there in Washington."

The irony is that in America it's OK for coaches to take a knee to protest America, but it's illegal for public school coaches to take a knee to pray to the Almighty.