

Strip Club in Nuns' Backyard Causes Sisters to Rise Up and Fight

The Thomas More Society has filed a lawsuit in Illinois' Cook County Circuit Court on behalf of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, the Village of Melrose Park and Melrose Park residents against Get It/Club Allure and the Village of Stone Park.

The Club Allure strip club opened across the back fence and adjacent to the convent and, as the suit filed Friday alleges, in violation of Illinois zoning law.

"The sisters have every right to pray and work peacefully without disruption from a strip club in their backyard," said Peter Breen, vice president and senior counsel of the Thomas More Society. "Nor should children have to walk past the strip club's litter of empty beer and whiskey bottles and used condoms. We are fighting for the rights of the sisters, neighboring families and people of Melrose Park. The Illinois state zoning law provides for their protection, and they deserve to have the law enforced."

The state of Illinois mandates a 1,000 foot buffer zone between adult entertainment venues and places of worship or schools. The village of Stone Park has allowed the \$3 million Club Allure strip club to open and operate since September, immediately adjacent to the convent, which hosts three chapels, a home for retired sisters, and a house for young women considering becoming nuns.

In addition to the strip club's blatant violation of the applicable Illinois zoning law, the Thomas More Society complaint asserts the following claims against the strip club:

- Numerous harms to the plaintiffs and other neighbors.
- The sisters were never notified of Stone Park's rezoning of the property immediately next to the convent and did not learn of it until construction of the strip club was near completion.
- Noise and glaring neon lights that flash on and off throughout the night until dawn.
- Public violence, including fist fights and drunkenness in the strip club vicinity.
- Litter, such as empty whiskey and beer bottles, used condoms, cigarette and cigar butts, surrounding the property.
- Loud, unruly and boisterous late-night pedestrian traffic, along with speeding cars.

Additionally, Stone Park has challenged the constitutionality of the Illinois buffer law, despite the fact that this law has been upheld, and the ruling affirmed by the Illinois Appellate Court.

Thomas More Society has asked the court to declare the strip club a nuisance and enforce the relief needed to redress and repair the defendants' violations of the plaintiffs' legal rights.