

# Supreme Court Case 'Will Affect the Free Speech of Every Believer' in America

It's a case the Liberty Counsel says law students will be studying for years, and one that will affect every American believer in Jesus from now until the end of time. *Shurtleff v. City of Boston*, a case that was argued before the United States Supreme Court on Tuesday, is simply that crucial for Christians.

In September 2017, Hal Shurtleff and his civic organization, Camp Constitution, applied to the city of Boston for a permit to raise the Christian flag on Boston City Hall flagpoles to commemorate Constitution Day and Citizenship Day (Sept. 17) and the civic and cultural contributions of the Christian community of the city of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, religious tolerance, the Rule of Law and the U.S. Constitution.

(Listen to the oral arguments from Tuesday's Supreme Court session [here](#)).

It wasn't an unordinary request. Between 2005 and 2017, the city of Boston had approved 284 flag raisings by private organizations without any denials. But request No. 285, Shurtleff's, was denied solely because he used the words "Christian flag" on the application.

Shurtleff brought his case to Liberty Counsel and since then, Liberty Counsel has been fighting in court to keep Shurtleff's Constitutional right to fly the flag alive. It made its way to the Supreme Court Tuesday, and Liberty Counsel Founder and CEO Mat Staver appeared in front of the high court to plead Shurtleff's case.

"I believe the arguments went very well," Staver says. "My argument was simply that the city of Boston blatantly censored religious viewpoints. Clearly the facts of this case indicate that Boston approved, to this point, 284 private, third-party flag raising requests with no denials and virtually no reviews. That is until Hal Shurtleff applied to fly a Christian flag for about one hour on Sept. 17.

"Boston City Commissioner (Gregory) Rooney denied the application solely because of one word, and that word was 'Christian.' What the evidence shows is that Boston would have allowed this same flag, the Christian flag, to fly had Hal Shurtleff denied that this was a Christian flag. In other words, the sole intent of Hal Shurtleff by accurately describing the flag as Christian was the reason. This viewpoint discrimination is unconstitutional, and that's what I argued."

The attorney for the city of Boston stated that the goal of the city is to foster diversity of communities, a statement picked apart by Justice Clarence Thomas.

"Wouldn't Christians be a part of that diversity that the city purports to support?" Thomas said. "Otherwise, isn't that limited diversity?"

"Justice Thomas said the city's view of diversity must be limited because the Christian community is part of that diverse community in Boston," Staver said. "The city attorney's response was simply not that good and Justice Thomas' response was absolutely correct. They wanted to recognize diversity but are saying that Christians, you are not a part of the diversity we want to recognize."

The Bunker Hill flag that the city of Boston has previously flown, Staver says, is "virtually identical" to the Christian flag, with the exception of the color scheme. The Christian flag is white with a blue square and a red cross. The Bunker

Hill flag is blue with a white square and a red cross.

Liberty Counsel Vice President of Media Holly Meade says that the Liberty Counsel is “proud that God gave us the privilege of this case, truly for a time such as this.”

Staver said Tuesday that the court will most likely not come to a decision in the case until June, when the high court finishes its final term. In the meantime, the nine justices will vote on the case and one justice will be assigned to write an opinion on the case before the decision is to be made public.

“Keep this case in prayer,” Staver says. “We don’t know when exactly it will happen, but we’re probably looking at June. This case will affect the free speech of every person.” {eo}

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