

Terry Jones Fighting Free Speech Battle Over Shariah Protest

Pastor **Terry Jones** is back in the news again. This time he's getting some legal support to stand up for his **First Amendment** rights in a high Muslim-populated city.

Jones is the Pentecostal pastor who caused an international stir after he threatened to burn the Quran on Sept. 11, 2010.

The Thomas More Law Center on Monday filed a federal lawsuit in the against the city of Dearborn—and its police chief—over the city's new tactic to stop Jones from speaking out against **shariah law**. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Jones, Stand Up America Now and Jones' associate pastor Wayne Sapp.

In February, Jones filed an application for a special events permit that would allow him to speak on Saturday, April 7, in front of the largest mosque in North America, which is located in Dearborn, Mich.

Dearborn, however, demanded that Jones and his organization sign a "Hold Harmless" agreement as a condition to granting the permit. The agreement requires Jones to surrender all of his legal rights if he wants to speak on public property.

"Plaintiffs should not be forced to sign a one-sided, unconscionable contract subject only to the unbridled discretion of the city's legal department in order to exercise their constitutional rights," says Erin Mersino, an attorney with The Thomas More Law Center. "The city's free speech restriction imposes an unconstitutional burden on plaintiffs' constitutional rights."

The Thomas More Law Center represented Jones and Sapp last

November after they were jailed in Dearborn before uttering a word. In that case, a State District Court judge ordered that they sign a “peace bond.” However, the Law Center overturned that order on appeal.

Apparently, it’s not just Jones whose **First Amendment rights** are being trampled. The Thomas More Law Center currently represents several Christian missionaries whose First Amendment rights have trespassed by Dearborn, home to the largest Muslim population in the United States.