

Chicago Threatens to Close, 'Destroy' Pentecostal Church

Today, the Chicago Department of Public Health sent a letter to Elim Pentecostal Church and other Romanian churches in the city threatening closure and "summary abatement." In the threatening letter, Commissioner Allison Arwady wrote: "I am authorized to seek to enjoin such nuisance or to cause the same to be summarily abated in such manner as I may direct. ..." The letter ended by stating that "the City will take steps necessary to abate, including Summary Abatement."

According to the Illinois Supreme Court, "Summary abatement would mean to put down or destroy without process. This means the inspector can, upon his own judgment, cause the alleged nuisance to stop on his own authority and effect a destruction of property at his discretion." *City of Kankakee v. New York Cent. R. Co.*, 387 Ill. 109, 116, 55 87, 90 (1944).

The day after President Donald Trump stated that houses of worship are essential and that governors must allow them to reopen, Chicago authorities declared religious gatherings undertaken with all the hygiene and social distancing guidelines to be a "public nuisance" subject to "summary abatement." Chicago is therefore threatening the closure and even destruction of church buildings in the "discretion" on a single individual.

Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, "In between President Donald Trump's announcement that houses of worship should open and Memorial Day where we honor brave men and woman who fought and died for our freedom, Chicago threatens to close and even destroy churches. What a contrast. The executive orders from Gov. J.B. Pritzker are an insult to the First Amendment and to all Americans who understand the price and value of religious freedom. Each day the thug

tactics to close churches in Illinois gets more bizarre and outrageous. The courts must stop this insanity.” {eoa}

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