

WEST VIRGINIA CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

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Boston Sued for Censoring Christian Flag

BOSTON, MA - Liberty Counsel filed a lawsuit today against the city of Boston and one of its officials for censoring the Christian flag of Boston resident Hal Shurtleff and his Christian civic organization, Camp Constitution. The city regularly extends to civic and cultural organizations the freedom to raise their flags on the city hall flagpoles to commemorate whatever events are important to the organizations.

However, when Camp Constitution asked the city for a permit to raise the Christian flag on Boston City Hall flagpoles to commemorate Constitution Day (September 17) and the civic and cultural contributions of Boston's Christian community, the city officials denied the permit based on a secret, unwritten, and unconstitutional "policy" of refusing religious flags.

Shurtleff began the permitting process for Camp Constitution's event in July 2017 and offered the city several proposed dates for that September. The city stonewalled. Yet after several follow-ups, the commissioner of property management revealed the city's secret, anti-Christian policy, as the reason for denial:

I am writing to you in response to your inquiry as to the reason for denying your request to raise the "Christian Flag." The City of Boston maintains a policy and practice of respectfully refraining from flying non-secular flags on the City Hall flagpoles. . . . According to the above policy and practice, the City of Boston has respectfully denied the request of Camp Constitution to fly on a City Hall flagpole the "Christian" flag, as it is identified in the request, which displays a red Latin cross against a blue square bordered on three sides by a white field...The City would be willing to consider a request to fly a non-religious flag, should your organization elect to offer one. (Emphasis added.)

The city's denial is unconstitutional because its past and current written policy and practice (and permit application) provides that Boston City Hall flagpoles are available for privately-selected flags to be flown upon request of virtually any private association or activity. Previously allowed flag-raising events include ethnic and other "cultural celebrations," corresponding with the raising of the flags of various countries or causes, and announcements of the same on the CityHallPlazaBoston.com website. Approved flags flown at such events include those of Albania, Brazil, Ethiopia, Italy, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and Mexico, as well as of Communist China and Cuba. The flag of the private "Chinese Progressive Association" has been raised. The "Juneteenth" flag has been raised by the private National Juneteenth Observance Foundation. A rainbow flag has been raised by the private organization Boston Pride. Even a "transgender" pink and blue flag has been raised. Since these have all been allowed, the city cannot deny Camp Constitution's permit request to fly the Christian flag.

In the lawsuit, Shurtleff and Camp Constitution seek an injunction requiring the city to allow the Christian flag-raising event that it denied in 2017, to coincide with the 2018 observance of Constitution Day, which will celebrate the civic and social contributions of the Christian community to the city of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, religious tolerance, the Rule of Law, and the U.S. Constitution, and will include historical and contemporary presentations, such as the need for racial reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

"Government officials cannot single out a religious viewpoint for disfavored treatment to a public forum that is open to non-religious viewpoints," said Mat Staver, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel. "The First Amendment protects the religious expression of all, and it prohibits the open hostility to religious viewpoints. The Massachusetts Constitution recognizes that 'the happiness of a people and the good order and preservation of civil government essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality,' and the Boston City Flag-flying on the same flagpoles denied to Camp Constitution-includes the Latin inscription, 'God be with us as he was with our fathers.' The city's censoring of religious viewpoints is not only unconstitutional, but also violates the historical and deeply held values of Boston, the Commonwealth, and the country," said Staver.

Denying TWU's bid for a law school was the right decision

By Corey Shefman
Expert Advisor. EvidenceNetwork.ca

In a society that prizes the rights and freedoms guaranteed to us by our Constitution, sorting through what to do when rights collide can be challenging. The Supreme Court of Canada recently dealt with that very issue.

The Supreme Court protected the dignity of LGBTQ people in Canada and the integrity of the legal profession by upholding decisions of the legal regulators (law societies) in British Columbia and Ontario to refuse accreditation for Trinity Western University's proposed law school.

Trinity Western is a private, evangelical Christian university in Langley, B.C., that requires its students and staff to agree to what it calls a "community covenant." Among other things, it prohibits sexual intimacy except between married, opposite-sex couples and no premarital sex or sex between married same-sex partners is allowed (no same-sex sex at all, in fact).

As Trinity Western sought accreditation for its law school in 2014, many lawyers, law students and law societies across Canada spoke up, concerned about what it would mean to give official sanction to a law school that effectively bans LGBTQ students from attending.

But many other law societies sat on their hands. Entry into the legal profession is strictly regulated. The law societies are often considered gatekeepers of the profession and have a duty to regulate in the public interest. It was on this basis that some of the societies refused to accredit Trinity Western.

In 2014, I spoke at the Law Society of Manitoba's annual general meeting, asking its governing body (the benchers) to join Ontario, B.C. and Nova Scotia and refuse to accredit Trinity Western's proposed law school. I told the society that "approving and accrediting TWU's law school demeans our profession and will diminish public confidence in the administration of justice."

The society's response was to pass the buck.

According to the Law Society of Manitoba, law school accreditation is the responsibility of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and, anyway, accreditation only considers curriculum, not other factors. While the federation had indeed been delegated the responsibility for accreditation, in light of Trinity Western's discriminatory covenant, other law societies had rightly revoked that delegation. I was asking Manitoba to do the same.

Disturbingly, variations of the same arguments made by Manitoba's law society were made by Trinity Western to the Supreme Court in defending its right to accreditation.

However, the Supreme Court, at the urging of those other, more courageous law societies, rejected that logic and decided that not only did the individual law societies have the authority to make the decision, it was right for them to have done so. The majority decision explains that the public interest duty of the law societies allows and requires them to consider issues like equal access and diversity within the legal profession.

Not only were the societies within their jurisdiction to refuse to accredit Trinity Western's law school, the court found that it simply wasn't plausible that denying accreditation would limit the religious rights of the Trinity Western community in a serious way.

While this fuss over who gets to be a lawyer may seem like an ivory tower problem, it's a concern that affects every Canadian. Access to justice is a national crisis and limiting who gets to be a lawyer by excluding LGBTQ law students from a portion of the already limited supply of law school seats makes that justice even less accessible to Canadians.

The issue of Trinity Western's accreditation may become moot. The university may choose not to open its law school or may choose to make its "community covenant" optional instead of mandatory. But until that happens, law societies, including Manitoba, must act. They must demonstrate that they stand for justice, for equality and for the law itself by denying accreditation to TWU.

To do otherwise would diminish the reputation of the legal profession throughout Canada, shake the public's confidence in the fairness of the justice system, and give licence to those who believe that LGBT people are less deserving of dignity and respect.

Every law student in Canada learns early that "justice should not only be done, it must be seen to be done."

The time for action came four years ago but it has not yet gone.



Logic

By Joe Ingino b.a.
Editor/Publisher

"I live a dream in a nightmare world"

THE INTERNET

I can proudly say that I was one of the internet's pioneers. I remember the days when the internet was nothing more than a bleep on a phone line.

To connect to it you would have to use this modem that would take for ever an a day to hook up. The old blue screens with yellow letter and no real software to use. No browsing. No real means to communicate except a search bar. There you would post a topic and an array of choices from reputable sources would come up. You clicked on one and a document would open that you would be able to read reputable and reliable information on the topic selected.

I can also proudly boast that the CENTRAL NEWSPAPER was the first newspaper to be publishing on line back in 1993. At the time no other media found interest on the internet as it was very basic. I remember a 24 page newspaper would take up to four days to input into the system.

Then came the Netscapes and a few other basic search engines. These search engines were nothing more than grouping of particular interest. A list of sources... most were either universities/colleges or people working in the discipline desired. I can truly say that the internet was useful. I remember the introduction of E:mail. We would give FREE emails and links to our web page...no takers as at that time no one had computers and no one knew what the net was. Time passed and chats spurred out of interest groups. By this time the internet had been recognized as a tool for communication from two distant points. It was establishing itself as a good source of reliable information. I remember when ICQ came out...what an invention... People could communicate from across the planet in real time. That was the golden age of the internet. FREE responsible access to the world.

Since then the internet has become something totally different. From the many chat rooms that are as useless as their advertisers, to the many search engines that are nothing but information gathering sources for advertisers.

Since the commercialization of the net. All search engines have become useless in my opinion. No matter the one you select. You must always be cautious of the validity of the information before you. Even organizations that seem legit are gathering information on you so that this information can be utilized to sell you all kinds of products and services.

Now some cell phones and computer are utilizing encryption, biometrics, finger printing, face recognition and iris scanning technologies... all in the name of convenience... in reality the internet is collecting all kinds of information without you even know it. For those in thought of Big Brother... you better believe it. Big Brother is government/big business.

Today the internet is so polluted with misleading information that those depend on it for information are constantly misled. How can it be on any given search engine the first few choices are all some sort of marketing scheme attempting to sell you something. Once you click on any choice you have marked yourself for all kinds of related offers and advertising.

We are beyond consumer beware. We are now into the surrender and submit to the new world order of marketing and monitoring of your every action through your purchases.

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