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Sixth Circuit to Hear Argument Tomorrow Over “Benghazi-like” Attack on Christians at Arab Festival

Cincinnati, Ohio (January 20, 2014) – Robert J. Muise, Co-Founder and Senior Counsel of the American Freedom Law Center (AFLC), will present oral argument on Tuesday, January 21, before a three-judge panel in the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, asking the court to overturn a lower court’s dismissal of a civil rights lawsuit brought by several Christian evangelists who were violently attacked by a hostile mob of Muslims while preaching at an Arab festival last year in Dearborn, Michigan. [Video of the Muslim assault](#) went viral on YouTube.

AFLC, a national nonprofit Judeo-Christian law firm, filed the lawsuit in September 2012 on behalf of the Christians against Wayne County, the Wayne County Sheriff, and two Wayne County Deputy Chiefs for not only refusing to protect the Christians from the attack but also for threatening to arrest the Christians for disorderly conduct if they did not halt their speech activity and immediately leave the festival area.

HEARING DETAILS

DATE: Tuesday, January 21, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. ET

ADDRESS: 636 – 6th Floor Courtroom
540 Potter Stewart U.S. Courthouse
100 East Fifth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

NOTE: Senior Counsel Robert Muise will be available for interviews after the hearing: he may be reached at (734) 635-3756 or rmuise@aflc.us

CASE BACKGROUND

In May 2013, Federal Judge Patrick J. Duggan, sitting in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, granted Wayne County’s motion for summary judgment and dismissed the lawsuit. In his ruling, Judge Duggan stated that “the actual demonstration of violence

here provided the requisite justification for [the Wayne County sheriffs'] intervention, even if the officials acted as they did because of the effect the speech had on the crowd.”

In its opening brief in the Sixth Circuit, AFLC argued that the district court’s decision to compel American citizens who engage in peaceful free speech activity to surrender their constitutional rights to violent mob rule now serves as a lawful justification for the government to suppress a speaker’s unpopular message.

Muise commented: “The district court’s ruling is an unprecedented blow to the First Amendment. Indeed, the fact that the court’s decision rewards and thus encourages violence as a legitimate means of suppressing unpopular speech jeopardizes the constitutional safeguards that our Founding Fathers fought so hard to establish.”

David Yerushalmi, AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel, added: “It is perhaps serendipitous that the court is hearing oral argument on this important First Amendment case the day following Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Reflecting back on that time in our Nation’s history and we plainly see the importance of protecting a private citizen’s right to freedom of speech from those who would do violence against the speaker because of his message. You may disagree with the speaker, but in our free society, he has a right to convey his message free from violence and government interference. Indeed, this is the United States and not Benghazi.”

The **American Freedom Law Center** is a Judeo-Christian law firm that fights for faith and freedom. It accomplishes its mission through litigation, public policy initiatives, and related activities. It does not charge for its services. The Law Center is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, and is recognized by the IRS as a section 501(c)(3) organization. Visit us at www.americanfreedomlawcenter.org.

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