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Contact: David Yerushalmi, Esq. **For Immediate Release: October 29, 2013**
(646) 262-0500
dyerushalmi@aflc.us

King County Asks Federal Court to Stay Litigation in Anti-Terrorism Bus Advertisement Dispute; Opposition Filed

Seattle, Washington (October 29, 2013) — In a strange twist to a prominent free speech case, King County, Washington, filed a motion last week for a stay in litigation over the King County transit authorities refusal to run an anti-terrorism advertisement on its public transit buses. The advertisement, which was sponsored by prominent human rights advocates Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and their organization, the American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI), displayed photographs of global terrorists from the FBI's most wanted list, most of whom have Muslim names or are wanted for terrorist acts that were committed in the name of Islam. King County allegedly denied the advertisement because it feared that it would be offensive to local Muslims.

Oddly, King County only asked for the stay to take effect after the court rules on the plaintiffs' motion for preliminary injunction, which asks the federal court to force the County to run the advertisements during the pendency of the litigation.

On October 7, the American Freedom Law Center (AFLC), a national, nonprofit Judeo-Christian law firm, filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington at Seattle on behalf of Geller, Spencer, and AFDI, challenging

the speech restriction on constitutional grounds. As part of its lawsuit, AFLC filed the motion for a preliminary injunction on October 9.

On October 27, AFLC filed an opposition to King County’s motion for a stay, arguing that the request is substantively deficient and therefore should be denied. In addition, AFLC argued that staying the litigation would prolong King County’s unconstitutional speech restriction against Geller, Spencer, and AFDI.

David Yerushalmi, AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel, commented: “Government violation of constitutional rights is neither trite nor compensable. Indeed, the Supreme Court has long held that the loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal periods of time, unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury. Here, King County has no intent to resolve the grave constitutional claims in this case through the normal course of litigation; instead, it would rather file baseless motions in an effort to maintain its ongoing degradation of the First Amendment.”

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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