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Federal Judge Enters Order Permitting Display of Pro-Life Signs Outside of Planned Parenthood while Lawsuit Proceeds

Ann Arbor, Michigan (May 20, 2013) — Late last Friday, a federal judge entered a stipulated order preliminarily halting the enforcement of a City of Ann Arbor, Michigan ordinance that prohibited a pro-life advocate from displaying a “Free Ultrasound” sign in his vehicle, which he parks outside of a local Planned Parenthood. The order will remain in effect during the pendency of a civil rights lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance.

The federal lawsuit was brought against the City of Ann Arbor and its Chief of Police by the American Freedom Law Center (AFLC), a national, non-profit Judeo-Christian law firm, on behalf of Paul Dobrowolski, a pro-life advocate.

Dobrowolski, who for many years has engaged in peaceful and non-obstructive anti-abortion protests on the public sidewalks and streets outside of the local Planned Parenthood, was twice ticketed by the City of Ann Arbor for displaying pro-life signs in his vehicle, which he legally parks on the public street outside of the abortion facility. According to the City ordinance at issue, a person is not allowed to park a vehicle on a City street or highway “for the principal purpose of . . . [d]isplaying advertising.” Dobrowolski’s signs included the following: “Ask to See the Ultrasound,” “Abortion Hurts Women,” and “Free Ultrasound, Family Life Services, 2950 Packard, YPSI, 734-434-3088.” The “Free Ultrasound” sign was considered “advertising” by the City police, and thus prohibited by the ordinance, resulting in the tickets.

The lawsuit alleges that the City ordinance is a content-based restriction on Dobrowolski’s speech in violation of the First Amendment and that it is unconstitutionally vague and deprives him of the equal protection of the law in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Robert Muise, Co-Founder and Senior Counsel of AFLC, commented: “While this court order restores Mr. Dobrowolski’s constitutional rights while the case proceeds, the greater victory is the untold number of babies whose lives will be saved now that he can resume his pro-life advocacy free from government interference.”

David Yerushalmi, AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel, added: “AFLC is committed to protecting the right to life and the right to freedom of speech of pro-life advocates such as Mr. Dobrowolski, who provide a necessary voice for the unborn. In this day and age, when the atrocities of the abortion industry – and it is an industry – are front and center in the Gosnell murder trial conviction, the battle in the courts is all the more critical.”

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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