



The Alliance Defense Fund has been involved in hundreds of cases in defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and traditional values. The stories below are just a small sampling of the ongoing battle to protect our religious liberty, reclaim what we have lost, and shape a future where religious freedom is affirmed.

THE CASE OF THE PINK TRIANGLE THE CASE OF THE SCHOOL SAFE ZONE

When Neil and Kathleen Houde learned that their daughter had been subjected to a lecture promoting homosexual behavior by her English teacher, they wrote their local school board to express their objections to the school district's "Pink Triangle" program which provides homosexual "mentors" to impressionable high school students.

The English teacher headed this program and provided "sexual counseling" to students at the local high school.

When their daughter tried to share her Christian views on homosexual behavior with the teacher, she was chastised and told that she was "narrow minded" and "wrong."

After the teacher learned about the Houdes' complaint and news of it appeared in the local newspaper, the teacher filed suit against them, **seeking more than \$15,000 for "emotional distress, embarrassment, anxiety, mental suffering, humiliation, and other damages."**

Homosexual activists got wind of the lawsuit and through an Internet campaign, poured thousands of dollars into the legal fight against the Houdes. It was their hope to intimidate and silence other Christians who might take a stand against pro-homosexual propaganda at school.

But because of the publicity and by God's grace, the school board reviewed the "safe zone" policy and voted to discontinue it. The lawsuit was dismissed.

THE CASE OF THE FAMILY LIFE CLASS

The state of Connecticut has a statute that allows parents and students to "opt-out" of "family life education" which includes a section on human sexuality. When a father heard about what was to be taught, he decided to exercise his right under the statute and have his son opt-out of the class.

The school refused to recognize the father's parental right (under the law) and refused to have the young boy excused from class. Rather than having his son attend a class that violated the family's sincerely-held moral beliefs, they chose to have him not attend. The school flunked the boy, who was a straight "A" student.

ADF allied attorney Vincent McCarthy came to the aid of the family. He said: “Apparently, the education establishment here is looking for a showdown. Interestingly, we have received quite a bit of media support from the normally liberal sources, which demonstrates how far the schools have veered from the norm.”

Eventually, the school relented, and gave the young boy credit for the class and removed the failing grade from his record. They also agreed to honor the Connecticut statute in all further cases.

THE CASE OF THE SILENCED SOAPBOX

ADF staff attorney Mike Johnson came to the aid of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana pro-life advocates who found their right to free speech impeded by local government officials. When these groups tried to stage their annual pro-life march and memorial service, local officials cited a vague local ordinance that regulated fairs and circuses in an attempt to silence the pro-lifers. Government officials instructed sheriff’s deputies to prevent the event organizers from using low volume amplification equipment, a small “soapbox” stage, and from playing religious songs to the peaceable crowd of nearly 300 that had assembled on public property – just like secular groups.

Mike attempted to intervene on behalf of the pro-life groups – with no success – to ensure that the Parish would honor the groups’ constitutional right to free speech and assembly. As a result, Mike filed a lawsuit against the Parish asking that officials stop enforcing ordinances that unconstitutionally regulate free speech.

Two days before a federal court would hear the case, Jefferson Parish officials used a rarely used emergency procedure to approve changes to the ordinances. While this is an encouraging development, this case will continue to move forward. Mike says: *“We asked them to make these changes three months ago, but the council’s negative response at the time left our clients with no choice but to file a lawsuit. Although the council now recognizes that the existing ordinances are blatantly unconstitutional, our clients suffered discrimination and the court must remedy that. Our first choice is to solve problems without litigation, but in cases like this one, the pro-life leaders needed legal representation and we are glad to help.”*

THE CASE OF PRAYER IN THE PARK

Some of the sweetest victories are not those that come the easiest, but the ones that come only after **years** of prayer, hard work, and perseverance.

ADF defended the right of the Gentala family to use a public park in Tucson. The Gentalas had requested use of a public park for the National Day of Prayer on the same terms as all other civic groups. However, they quickly learned there were two sets of rules – one for Christians and one for others – and were told that they would have to pay for use of services that non-religious groups received free of charge.

What emerged was a **six-year** legal battle involving the National Day of Prayer and the city of Tucson, Arizona. The battle has gone on for so long that Peter Gentala, son of the plaintiffs, who was in college when the case was launched, has **graduated from both college and law school and became a lawyer on the ADF legal team!**

This case went through the judicial system -- all the way to the United States Supreme Court -- which sent it back to federal district court (which had ruled against the Gentalas and the National Day of Prayer a few years ago) for further consideration after the ADF-supported Supreme Court victory in *Good News Club v. Milford Central School*.

In November 2003, the federal district court ruled that the city of Tucson's discrimination against the National Day of Prayer and people of faith must finally end – now!

“This is a huge victory for free speech and a defeat for those who would like to censor Christian voices,” said ADF chief counsel Benjamin Bull. *“The organizers of the Tucson National Day of Prayer were only asking for a level playing field, and the court is to be commended for its ruling... The court’s decision establishes once again that local governments cannot discriminate against the National Day of Prayer or other Christian groups in accessing government facilities.”*