

Supreme Court Hands Big Win To Small Church

Written by Suzanne Koch

Saturday, 20 June 2015 11:13 -

Today the United States Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision that is a major victory for religious speech and for houses of worship across the country.

Moments ago, the Supreme Court issued a unanimous ruling protecting the [Good News Community Church and Pastor Clyde Reed](#) from the town of Gilbert, Arizona's unfair sign ordinance, which allowed large political sidewalk signs to be displayed for months but restricted houses of worship to tiny signs that could only be displayed for less than 14 hours. The Justices voted 9-0 to strike down Gilbert's sign ordinance.

"Gilbert had taken a page from George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, saying that all citizens were equal, but that politicians were 'more equal' than everyone else," said **Eric Rassbach, Deputy General Counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty**. "The Supreme Court rightly decided that churches and other religious speakers should not be treated like second-class citizens."

Small houses of worship such as Good News Community Church rely on signs to invite community members to their services because they often do not have a permanent meeting location and have limited means to share their message.

In Gilbert, the controversial sign regulations struck down today allowed large political signs to stand for months, but demanded that houses of worship, like Good News Community Church, use signs less than half that size and pull them down after only fourteen hours. Church or synagogue signs could be no larger than 6 square feet – about 81% smaller than political signs (32 sq. ft).

Alliance Defending Freedom represents Good News Community Church and Pastor Clyde Reed in its litigation against the ordinance. In September 2014, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty [filed a friend-of-the-court brief](#) in this case.