



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Intolerable

Birmingham, Alabama — April 12, 2018. The Center for Religious Expression (CRE) filed a federal lawsuit today challenging the City of Birmingham's unconstitutional ban on Craig Hendrix keeping him from peacefully sharing his Christian faith on public sidewalks along the route of a popular local parade.

On June 10, 2017, Hendrix and his family travelled to Birmingham to share their faith with people attending the Central Alabama Pride Parade. Traversing the public sidewalks near and along the parade route shortly before the parade was scheduled to begin, Hendrix and his family passed out Christian literature and engaged bystanders in cordial conversations about the love of Jesus Christ, without causing any problems whatsoever. However, they were soon approached by representatives of the parade, who insisted they leave the area immediately, because they did not like Hendrix's Christian message. Hendrix knew he was within his rights, but, in effort to avoid a conflict, he relocated to a public sidewalk a short distance away along the parade route.

Dissatisfied that Hendrix was not leaving entirely, parade representatives contacted Birmingham police, who came out and informed Hendrix that he was forbidden from passing out tracts on public sidewalks without a permit of his own, and that he could not get one because the Pride Parade already had one and didn't want him there. Police warned that Hendrix would be subject to criminal sanction if he did not leave the sidewalks along the entire parade route. Not wanting to get arrested or cited, Hendrix and his family left the area. Meanwhile, the rest of the public remained free to stand on those same sidewalks from which Hendrix and his family were banned, many of them sharing their own viewpoints.

Hoping to share his faith at future Pride Parades, Hendrix sent a letter, through counsel, to Birmingham officials, asking that they cease restricting his peaceful literature distribution on public sidewalks in Birmingham. But Birmingham officials never responded. Left with no assurance that his constitutional rights would be respected in the future, Hendrix filed suit.

"There is no legal basis for making someone get a government-issued permit just to pass out literature on a public sidewalk," said CRE Chief Counsel Nate Kellum. "Birmingham has improperly used its permit scheme to exile Hendrix from the sidewalks because someone happens to dislike his message. This conduct is intolerable under the First Amendment."

Center for Religious Expression is a servant-oriented, non-profit 501(c)(3) Christian legal organization dedicated to the glory of God and the religious freedom of His people. For more information, visit <http://www.crelaw.org>.