



NEWS RELEASE

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Free Speech Victory: City of Coldwater Repeals Unconstitutional Resolution after Tea Party Files Lawsuit

ANN ARBOR, MI – As a result of a federal lawsuit filed by the Thomas More Law Center on behalf of a local Tea Party group, the City of Coldwater, Michigan has repealed its draconian restriction of free speech in its downtown city park. The restriction, in the form of a Resolution passed by the City Council last November, prohibited “*the display of banners or other signs of any type or description whatsoever in the Four Corners Parks in the City of Coldwater.*”

The Thomas More Law Center (TMLC), a national conservative Christian public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, voluntarily dismissed its federal lawsuit after the City repealed the resolution at its Monday, April 25 City Council meeting and agreed to pay the Law Center its attorney fees and costs in the amount of \$8,347.50.

TMLC had filed the lawsuit alleging violations of the constitutional right to freedom of speech on behalf of the Common Sense Patriots of Branch County, Barbara Brady and Martin Lepper.

TMLC Senior Trial Counsel Rob Muise, who was handling the case for the Tea Party, commented: “I’m pleased that we were able to bring about a quick victory for our clients and the First Amendment.”

The Common Sense Patriots of Branch County was established in 2009 as part of the nationwide political, grass-roots movement of American patriots known as the Tea Party. It gathered several times each year for events often held at the Four Corners Park, located in downtown Coldwater. These political assemblies and rallies would invariably involve the display of numerous political signs and banners with slogans such as “No More Taxes,” “Give Me Liberty... Not Debt” and “Born Free... Taxed to Death.”

As it had with other groups in the past, the City allowed the Patriots to place a sign at the park entrance announcing their meetings. However, in July 2010, the City Manager informed the Patriots that they could no longer put up their sign. The City refused to give any specific explanation other than the City had received some complaints.

Richard Thompson, TMLC President and Chief Counsel, commented: “Clearly, the City’s ban on all signs was prompted by complaints against the Tea Party. Nevertheless, I applaud the city attorney for quickly resolving this lawsuit by acknowledging that the City’s blanket ban on signs was unconstitutional.”

The Thomas More Law Center defends and promotes America’s Christian heritage and moral values, including the religious freedom of Christians, time-honored family values, and the sanctity of human life. It supports a strong national defense and an independent and sovereign United States of America. The Law Center accomplishes its mission through litigation, education, 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. You may reach the Thomas More Law Center at (734) 827-2001 or visit our website at www.thomasmore.org.

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