



FACT SHEET

Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia v. Pauley

ABOUT THE CASE

Trinity Lutheran Church Child Learning Center in Columbia sought to participate in the 2012 Playground Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant Program. The center wished to remove and replace a large portion of the pea gravel surfacing on its playgrounds with a safer, recycled, pour-in-place rubberized product. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources disqualified Trinity Lutheran solely because it is operated by Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, pointing to a section of the state constitution that prohibits government funding of religion. Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys point out that the government is clearly not endorsing religion by simply providing recycled tires to create a safer environment on playgrounds. They also point out that the state constitution actually prohibits both religious discrimination and preferential treatment of religion.

STATUS AS OF 2016-07-05

Alliance Defending Freedom filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court that asked the court to reverse a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit, which upheld a district court ruling in favor of the state. The Supreme Court accepted the case on January 15, 2016.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

- Whether a state can define religious neutrality as treating religious organizations worse than everyone else.
- Whether a state constitution can be interpreted to require hostility and discrimination against people of faith.
- Whether children at schools that state officials don't prefer will be considered less worthy of benefitting from a program that has no religious purpose.

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ABOUT Alliance Defending Freedom

Alliance Defending Freedom is an alliance-building, non-profit legal organization that advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith.

ABOUT David Cortman

David A. Cortman serves as senior counsel and vice president of litigation with Alliance Defending Freedom. Cortman heads all direct litigation efforts to protect religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, and marriage and the family. He has been practicing constitutional law for more than 17 years and has successfully litigated nearly 200 cases at every level, including recent victories at the U.S. Supreme Court and federal courts of appeal. He is admitted to the bar in Georgia, Florida, Arizona, and the District of Columbia. Cortman obtained his J.D. magna cum laude from Regent University School of Law.

ABOUT Erik Stanley

Erik Stanley serves as senior counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom, where he is director of the Center for Christian Ministries. He focuses his practice on protecting the constitutional rights of churches and religious organizations. Stanley has filed, briefed, and argued numerous trial and appellate cases on constitutional issues throughout the United States. Stanley graduated from Temple University School of Law in the top five percent of his class. He is a bar member of Florida, Kansas, Arizona, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Supreme Court, and numerous federal district and appellate courts.