

Boston facing lawsuit after banning Christian flag-raising over city hall, while 284 others are approved

July 16, 2019 | Frieda Powers (<https://www.bizpacreview.com/author/frieda-powers>) |

Refusing to allow a Christian flag to be flown at city hall has landed the city of Boston, Mass. in a federal lawsuit.

A group is suing the city for religious discrimination after it refused to allow displaying the flag with the inter-denominational symbol on two different occasions, despite allowing 284 other flag-raising events at city hall, Fox News (<https://www.foxnews.com/us/boston-lawsuit-christian-flag-religious-discrimination>) reported.



(File Photo: Screenshot/ CBS Boston – Nathaniel Shurtleff and Tom Moor of Camp Constitution)

“There’s no question that it is an unconstitutional act and originally said it was a violation of the First Amendment, which I find ironic,” Hal Shurtleff, director and co-founder of Camp Constitution, told Fox News.

“I’m optimistic the lawsuit will go our way,” he added.

A one-hour event planned for Constitution Day on Sep. 17, 2017 had to be cancelled by Camp Constitution after the city turned down the request to fly the flag. Another request was refused again in 2018, prompting Matthew Staver of Liberty Counsel to slam the city for its “unconstitutional censorship.”

"Censoring religious viewpoints in a public forum where secular viewpoints are permitted violates the First Amendment," Staver, the founder and chairman of the religious freedom law firm which represents Shurtleff said in a statement.

"Boston city officials may not ban the Christian flag as part of a privately-sponsored event when they allow any other flag by numerous private organizations. It's time for the court to stop the city's unconstitutional censorship," he said.

New "key facts" in the lawsuit, which comes after a federal court and appeals court ruled against Shurtleff, will hopefully "compel a result in Camp Constitution's favor," the law firm believes.

Boston's reason for banning Camp Constitution's Christian flag was that no non-secular flags were permitted to be flown. But, according to the lawsuit (<http://lc.org/070919BostonMemoranduminSupportofPlaintiffsMSJ.pdf>), since 2005 the Turkish flag which features an Islamic star and crescent was allowed to be raised 13 times on city hall flagpoles. The Communist Chinese flag, the Vatican flag and the pride flag were also allowed to fly over city hall in the past.

"Yet, despite all of these many flag raisings containing religious symbols and imagery, and the City's allowing the official flag of the Catholic Church, Camp Constitution's proposed flag raising was denied because it was 'religious,'" the lawsuit stated. "There can be no dispute that the City's denial impermissibly discriminated between religion and non-religion, and discriminated between religious sects. Both violate the Establishment Clause."

The suit argues that the Commissioner of the City of Boston Property Management Department, Gregory Rooney – who had the final say in authorizing the flags to be flown – "never requested to review a flag prior to approval, never requested any changes to a flag prior to approval, and never denied a flag raising application prior to Camp Constitution's."

The filing continued:

Rooney ultimately denied the application because Camp Constitution called the flag “the Christian flag,” causing him “concern[]” that it “was promoting a specific religion,” and he “didn’t think that it was in the city’s best interest to necessarily have that flag flying above City Hall.” (JS ¶¶ 46, 54.) Rooney would not have been concerned if the same flag was called “the Camp Constitution flag” because then “it would have been the flag of the organization and not a religious symbol.”

“The city’s application policy refers to the flagpoles as a ‘public forum’ open to ‘all applicants,’” Shurtleff said in a statement (<https://campconstitution.net/author/hal-shurtleff/>), “City officials have never denied the ‘messages’ communicated by Boston Pride and the pink and blue ‘transgender’ flag, and even the flags of Communist China and Cuba, but will not allow the civic and historical Christian message of Camp Constitution.

The city claims on its

website (<https://www.boston.gov/departments/property-management/boston-city-hall-plaza-flag-raising-dates>) that the flag-raising events are part of an effort to “create an environment in the City where everyone feels included, and is treated with respect.”

“Our goal is to foster diversity and build and strengthen connections among Boston’s many communities,” the website states.

Those ideals seemed far from reality as Twitter users soon responded.

Boston is INFECTED with Anti Americans. Time to replace those in their gov't jobs with True Americans.

– Kim T. Anthony (@kimtanthony)

July 15, 2019 (https://twitter.com/kimtanthony/status/1150873538594791430?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

I sure hope the Christians win this battle. Let's start flying Christian flags all over the place. I'm getting one for my home.

– catherine marriott (@cnamarriott)

July 16, 2019 (https://twitter.com/cnamarriott/status/1150920498768994304?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Of course they did! Democrat controlled, what do you expect!

– John Bailey (@JohnBail7426411)

July 15, 2019 (https://twitter.com/JohnBail7426411/status/1150885674427518979?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

@marty_walsh (https://twitter.com/marty_walsh?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) who constantly touts how 'inclusive' Boston is...except for groups he doesn't want included.

– The New Englander (@NewEnglandTruth)

July 15, 2019 (https://twitter.com/NewEnglandTruth/status/1150860192147562496?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ridiculous crap like this is why I left Massachusetts

– John K (@JohnK59494480)

July 15, 2019 (https://twitter.com/JohnK59494480/status/1150864004761509888?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Not surprised, Another democrat run city.

– Frank Aiken for Trump (@awesomeaiken)

August 26, 2018 (https://twitter.com/awesomeaiken/status/1033833112663457793?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Hey Boston fly one flag then fly them all.

– Bill Stevens (@billydeen643)

August 27, 2018 (https://twitter.com/billydeen643/status/1034135412040769536?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

I am glad they are suing, its about time we stand up

– DonnaS (@scamptres1)

August 27, 2018 (https://twitter.com/scamptres1/status/1034171696473890816?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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