Mar 2, 2022

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Urges U.S. Supreme Court to Protect the Religious Freedom of Public-School Employees

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is fighting to protect the religious freedom of public-school employees. Leading 26 other states, Attorney General Moody is urging the Supreme Court of the United States to reverse the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on *Joseph A. Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*. In this case, the Ninth Circuit failed to uphold the constitutional rights of a high school coach punished for praying alone on a football field in view of students.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “High school coaches, like other government employees, do not check their constitutional rights at the door when they agree to pursue a career of public service. We should be encouraging people of faith to pursue noble careers educating and coaching our youth.”

The amicus brief argues that:

- Contrary to the Ninth Circuit’s opinion, Supreme Court precedents do not hold that a public employee’s private speech, like Coach Kennedy’s private prayer, is exempt from First Amendment protection;
- Allowing the School District to justify its discriminatory actions under the Establishment Clause not only conflicts with settled constitutional principles, but it also creates problems for both public employers and employees; and
- The Ninth Circuit’s curtailment of First Amendment liberties is detrimental to public service. Private religious expression and public service can and must coexist.

Attorney General Moody is joined by the attorneys general of the following states in filing the brief: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

To view a copy of the amicus brief, click here.