

Independence Law Center at a glance

1. Mechanicsburg, PA

Four students courageously stood up against their school for multiple constitutional violations - and ended up having to go to court to protect their rights - and won. (See page 4).

2. Erie, PA

A teacher and principal told a mother that they would need to cut a reference to John 3:16 from her son's Valentine's Day cards for him to be allowed to share them with classmates. The mom called us, and we notified the school that religious speech is constitutionally protected. They understood, and agreed that this student should have been allowed to distribute his cards with the John 3:16 reference.

3. Fort Indiantown Gap, PA

When the National Guard denied Trail Life USA Troop PA-2717's request to tour the base because of the group's religious affiliation, the Independence Law Center got the base to rescind its denial. National attention to the situation means Trail Life troops from around the country are less likely to see their religious freedom infringed. (See page 3).

4. Tunkhannock, PA

Northmoreland Baptist Church was forced to pay property taxes on a newly-built fellowship hall, contrary to state law and the longstanding American understanding that churches should not be taxed. On behalf of the church, the ILC went to court which ruled in the church's favor, saving that church and others in the county from the unjust taxation.

5. Greencastle, PA

Joy El Ministries, a weekly release-time ministry to over 3,000 children in our state, was weeks away from being forced to shut down its ministry. ILC, in partnership with volunteer attorneys Jim Smith, Joel Ready, and David Crossett, took action, won a favorable court ruling, and now Joy El continues bringing public school children the opportunity to hear the gospel during the school day.

6. Quakertown, PA

A ministry called The King's Men were using their First Amendment rights to peacefully stand outside of some "adult" bookstores and strip clubs to encourage men to not frequent such establishments. When one of these sexually-oriented businesses sought to end the protests by taking The King's Men to court, ILC along with volunteer attorneys Jeff Conrad and Emily Bell, stepped in. All claims were dismissed.

7. Strasburg, PA

A family who uses their residence on Sundays for a home church received a letter from the Borough Zoning Office attempting to prohibit the gatherings. We got involved, and the Borough rescinded its cease and desist order and now the church gatherings continue.

8. Johnstown, PA

For a Fall class party, a school stopped an eight-year-old from sharing candy bars with a poem and her favorite Bible verse - John 3:16 - attached. We sent a letter to the school on the family's behalf and after some positive discussions, the student is now free to share her favorite verse in this manner with her classmates.

9. Sewickley Heights, PA

Sewickley Heights sent a cease and desist letter demanding that a family stop holding Bible studies in their home unless they first went through the lengthy process of obtaining a conditional use permit. The Zoning Hearing Board agreed with the Independence Law Center and rejected the Borough's attempt to regulate the Bible studies.

10. Lehigh County, PA

Lehigh County faced a lawsuit because their official seal contains a cross. The Independence Law Center filed a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of numerous states in support of the constitutionality of the county's cross in their seal. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit unanimously ruled in the county's favor.

11. Harrisburg, PA

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives invites guest chaplains to offer the prayer, but it excludes nontheists (those who do not espouse belief in a god or gods, though not necessarily atheists) from serving as chaplains on the theory that "prayer" presupposes a higher power. A group of atheists and other non-theists sued the PA House, but the Third Circuit ruled in the House's favor. We filed a friend-of-the-court brief that was cited in the opinion. (See page 12).

12. Across The Commonwealth

In dozens of cities, boroughs and small towns -- at churches, businesses and community gatherings, Pennsylvania Family Institute and the Independence Law Center have held seminars and training sessions (like our "Freedom in the Balance" program) to educate citizens, ministry leaders and others on advancing and protecting their constitutional liberties, and help their families and communities flourish.



Everything we do at the Independence Law Center centers around enhancing your ability to live out your faith. We're advancing the gospel through protecting Christian ministries, protecting religious liberty in our education systems and preserving your right to live out your values in today's society. These services are provided free of charge thanks to concerned individuals and families financially partnering with us.