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Alabama Attorney General Marshall Leads 26-State Coalition Supporting Religious Liberty Before U.S. Supreme Court

Says, 'transit authority brazenly targeted religious speech' by 'unlawfully denying a Jewish synagogue's proposed holiday advertisement solely because it was religious'

(Montgomery, Ala) – Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall led a coalition of 26 states that filed a brief Friday before the U.S. Supreme Court opposing the Hillsborough County Transit Authority's no-religious-speech advertising policy. The coalition urged the Court to review the policy because it infringed on the First Amendment rights of a Jewish synagogue, Young Israel of Tampa, to advertise on public transportation in Tampa, Florida.

"By unlawfully denying a Jewish synagogue's proposed holiday advertisement solely because it was religious, the transit authority brazenly targeted religious speech as the object of its discrimination. Our 26-state coalition recognizes that such discrimination is a direct attack on the First Amendment, and we look forward to continuing our support of Young Israel," stated Attorney General Marshall.

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) rejected Young Israel of Tampa's proposed advertisement for its "Chanukah on Ice" event because it was religious. And it accepted another group's advertisement for its "Winter Village" event because it was not religious. Under HART's no-religious-speech advertising policy, that singular difference – that one ad was religious and the other was not – led the government entity to reject "Chanukah on Ice" and accept "Winter Village."

Alabama has previously led two multistate briefs in support of Young Israel before the Eleventh Circuit.

Attorney General Marshall led the coalition which included the states of Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

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