

January 2025

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This month our Educational Update focuses primarily on upcoming likely issues in the Alabama Legislature. We provide free legal assistance on a number of issues to Legislators and groups who work in the statehouse.

Free speech issues are rising in the public square related to perverse activities. Activities, as well as pure speech, are protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Over the years, Christian groups have sought protection under the First Amendment for speech and activities ranging from Nativity scenes at Christmas to protection of religious speech threatened by government dictates.

All types of speech are protected with few limitations. Shouting “Fire” in a public theater is one of the common examples. Defamation (slander and libel) is another example.

In 2023, a Satanic holiday display was permitted in the Iowa State Capitol. This past year, Wisconsin permitted a Satanic display in its state capitol.

Close to home, citizens from a local municipality consulted with us about permitting a “drag queen float” in the Christmas parade. There have been similar requests and demonstrations in other places.

Years ago, we represented the Mayor of Birmingham who refused a permit for a homosexual pride parade. That ended up in the federal court protecting the homosexuals’ First Amendment rights. Similarly, these other activities have protection. Each case must be decided on its own facts and the expression is not unlimited.

One of the things that will prohibit or limit these kinds of activity is the amendment to the Alabama Anti-Obscenity Enforcement Act to remove public demonstrations and materials that are harmful to minors. Other bills restricting that activity in public places are being proposed for this year’s session. These are included in the Update.

Thank you for your continued support. With best wishes for the New Year, we are,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston

AEJ/jfj