

From the desk of Tom Brejcha, Founder and President...

September 3, 2025

Dear Friend,

Nearly every day, we hear from pastors, parents, and faithful pro-life business owners who are caught in difficult circumstances and find themselves in urgent need of legal help.

Their voices reflect profound concern often filled with deep worry as they describe hostile anti-life government orders, mounting legal threats, and the constant, seemingly unrelenting, pressure to betray their conscientious and most deeply held beliefs.

Our clients don't want special treatment... they just want to live out their faith proudly, in public, without fear. Whether it's running their ministry, helping pregnant women in difficult situations, or simply sharing the pro-life message, all they want is fair treatment and for their rights to free speech and free exercise of their religious faith to be respected.

Their testimonies aren't just stories on a page, but real people staying true to their beliefs and overcoming adverse pressure from well-funded, forceful antagonists.

Our clients come from ministries facing government orders to pay for abortions, families punished for choosing parochial schools, and sidewalk counselors threatened for offering hope to stressed, abortion-bound mothers on city sidewalks. I'm writing to you today because the challenges they face may well reach your own doorstep if we don't act.

We live in a pivotal and potentially decisive time that may well determine the course of our nation's history. The battles unfolding, from New York to Illinois to California, and beyond, will determine whether the fundamental values bound up with our mission—life, family, and freedom—are protected... or persecuted and banished from our public life.

This fight has intensified and has become critical in Illinois during this past month...

Illinois to religious employers: 'Pay for abortions or strip health insurance from workers'

Imagine shepherding a Christ-centered ministry for decades. Every day, you share the Gospel, build churches, care for families, and live out your deepest convictions.

Now imagine this: Illinois officials tell you, "Pay for abortion coverage in your employees' health plan... or walk away from providing insurance for your hardworking team."

That's exactly what our clients at the Illinois Baptist State Association are facing now.

They did everything right. IBSA pleaded with insurers: “Can we get a plan that respects our values?” No luck. They explored self-insured options: too risky, too expensive.

Out-of-state or national plans? Too costly, or they didn’t cover local hospitals and clinics where their employees go. Every year, they got the same answer: “In Illinois, abortion coverage is mandatory.” For IBSA’s leaders—and their employees—the sense of betrayal runs deep.

Their ministry has always stood for life, from the moment of conception. Never did they imagine being forced to subsidize something so contrary to their faith.

Here’s what stings most: *lawmakers promised protections*.

During debate, Illinois politicians stood on the debate floor and assured everyone that faith groups won’t have to fund abortion. There are conscience safeguards, they said...

But when IBSA asked for those protections, the insurers and politicians alike gave them the cold shoulder. Every exemption denied. Illinois’ bureaucrats tried to defend themselves by saying, “There are ways around the law, you just have to give up choices and pay more.”

That’s not just wrong—it’s illegal.

This is why Thomas More Society is fighting for them with everything we have. When our attorneys, Special Counsel Matt and Tim Belz from St. Louis, appeared in Springfield, Illinois, court last month for our appellate argument in this case, we showed that this is a blatant violation of religious liberty.

Illinois’ Religious Freedom Restoration Act was designed to shield ministries like IBSA from exactly this kind of government coercion. The law forbids the state from burdening sincere religious practice *unless absolutely necessary*, and only in the least restrictive way.

In defiance of this powerful, explicit law, Illinois has stripped away every real alternative and coerced pro-life ministries and employers into choosing between paying for abortion with their insurance premiums or leaving their employees without health insurance coverage.

These grim alternatives pose crushing choices for a conscientious Christian ministry... a heartbreaking dilemma that no American should ever face.

In nearly every state mandating abortion coverage, faith-based employers are protected. *But not in Illinois*. Why are our clients cast as outlaws for practicing what they preach?

We’ll be sure to update you when we receive a decision in this crucial case.

Pennsylvania fumbles on the First Amendment by excluding parochial school athletes. But change may soon be statewide!

For Justin Kurpeikis, sending his children to Catholic school was a top priority—even if it meant missing out on “big-school” perks: a packed gym for basketball or the surge of excitement under Friday night lights.

For Justin, Friday night lights meant something personal. As a former NFL linebacker—and Super Bowl champion with the 2004 New England Patriots—he knows exactly how much character, teamwork, and opportunity shape young men and women on the field.

But when Justin’s children—who attended a Catholic school that was too small to afford its own sports teams—wanted to suit up for their local public school’s team, they hit the wall.

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), the statewide gatekeeper for school sports, has a rule: if you’re a parochial school kid without a team, *you’re off the field!*

Meanwhile, charter, homeschool, and cyber school students get to participate in athletics at the local public school district alongside their peers.

“It doesn’t seem right, because the homeschoolers and the kids who go to charter schools were able to participate,” says C. Grier Yartz, another client of ours, and a father whose own child was denied a fair chance to compete. He pays taxes just like everyone else, but his son was shut out because the family prioritized his having a Catholic education.

The message from PIAA? Pick your faith or your chance to play under the Friday night lights... *but not both.*

Here’s the harsh legal reality: the PIAA is not just another private group. PIAA’s control over athletics and its close ties to Pennsylvania’s public schools make it a “state actor.”

So, that means when the PIAA hands out exceptions for charter and homeschool students but excludes religious families, it’s not just unfair—it’s *unconstitutional*. **The 1st Amendment’s Free Exercise Clause and 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection of Law principles directly apply here...**

The Supreme Court has made clear that government agencies and state actors can’t treat religious families as second-class citizens. Singling out and excluding faithful religious students from general public benefits, like sports teams, contravenes clear constitutional protections.

We already won a major federal court victory in State College, PA (hometown of Penn State), ending an identical policy that sidelined parochial school students while letting others in.

But PIAA rules still control athletics statewide. Right now, parochial school kids without athletic programs remain benched. That’s why we have gone back to court, demanding that the PIAA respect both religious families and the Constitution, and that it do so on a statewide basis.

Until every child gets a fair shot to run out on that playing field, our work isn't done. And this fight isn't just about one family—Justin and Grier are taking a stand for every family whose son or daughter is enrolled in a Pennsylvania religious school.

With you alongside us, Thomas More Society will not rest until religious discrimination like this is entirely curtailed. Recent developments in the case have raised our hopes... Soon every Pennsylvania student may have a fair shot at playing time. We'll report back next month!

We're knocking at the door of the U.S. Supreme Court in defense of wedding cake designer Cathy Miller

For eight years, Cathy Miller has fought to run her bakery in Bakersfield, CA without sacrificing her faith.

From the start, our Thomas More Society has been in Cathy's corner, standing beside her throughout relentless legal attacks. Back in 2018, after months of lengthy court proceedings, we won her first big victory: the judge ruled that Cathy could keep her business open...

When California kept coming after Cathy with every weapon at its disposal, we fought and won a major courtroom victory in 2022, after a grueling trial. Cathy's right not to design cakes to celebrate LGBTQ weddings against her deeply held religious belief was vindicated...

But California's bureaucrats wouldn't quit. They branded Cathy a bigot and pushed appeal after appeal to make her bend the knee. A California appeals court turned on Cathy and overturned our win at trial. Then the California Supreme Court refused to hear our appeal.

This weaponized campaign of LGBTQ lawfare nearly ruined Cathy's business...

Cathy and her staff ignored the hateful threats they received, while California doubled down on its crusade to force her to violate and flout her beliefs. And despite our major trial win, relentless appeals by the State of California now have left Cathy's rights hanging by a thread.

Now, it all comes down to our prospects for justice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Our attorneys have partnered with the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty to help Cathy file her appeal to the High Court, petitioning the Justices to protect Cathy's religious freedom—and to set a precedent to protect other believers who would serve their neighbors with integrity.

"All I want is to serve my neighbors as the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls me to—without being forced to create messages that violate my beliefs," Cathy says.

This case's importance reaches far beyond the plight of Cathy or her bakery. At stake is the freedom of all Americans to live by their faith in daily life, to run their business, to follow their conscience—*without bureaucrats dragging them into court to exact such a ruinous price.*

We've won for Cathy before, and we're hopeful we can do it again. But we can't do it without generous friends like you who have faithfully supported our critical work. Please pray for Cathy and our legal team. I'll be sure to keep you in the know on what happens next!

Judge finds New York county liable for silencing pro-life speech

For years, Westchester County, New York enforced a sweeping pro-abortion law restricting pro-life speech near abortion facilities. Sidewalk counselors who peacefully offered alternatives or handed out leaflets risked jail time, heavy fines, and public censure.

Now, the federal judge in our lawsuit against Westchester's law has found the county liable for violating the First Amendment. The court ruled that Westchester's anti-life law went too far when it criminalized ordinary conversation, outreach, and advocacy on public sidewalks... all of which can save a life.

Even after the county repealed much of its ordinance, the Judge made clear: *harm to our constitutional rights doesn't simply disappear just because a law is quietly jettisoned.*

This win protects not only our sidewalk counselor clients Oksana Hulinsky and Regina Molinelli, but also sends a strong message nationwide: government attempts to silence life-affirming speech will not stand and such unconstitutional speech restraints come with a price.

Nevertheless, some unconstitutional restrictions remain on the books in Westchester. And so our fight there is not over...

We plan to persist in pressing our appeal against those restrictions, especially against the County's so-called "following-and-harassing" rule, which the law defines so vaguely that it's as obscure as deep fog—making it crystal clear that Westchester designed it for use as a cudgel to suppress normal, peaceable sidewalk counseling activities!

Your financial generosity makes all this critical legal work possible

Right now, ministries like the Illinois Baptist State Association are being told, **"Pay for abortions, or take health care away from your staff."**

In Pennsylvania, parochial school families—including Super Bowl champion Justin Kurpeikis—are fighting for their children to have the right to play and compete, without being relegated to the sidelines for putting their faith first.

Cathy Miller's major Supreme Court appeal is now underway after years of relentless attacks from California officials who want to force her—and *millions of believers like her*—to violate their conscience or shut down their businesses.

Here's the thing... Sustaining this work requires urgent and ongoing support.

So please, will you help us defend pro-lifers and faithful Americans, with a gift of \$500, \$250, or \$100? We also need lots of urgent gifts in the range of \$75, \$50, \$35—or whatever you can sacrifice.

You and I know our pro-abortion opposition—backed by the powerful abortion lobby and anti-family forces—is persistent and well-funded, determined to wear down and silence Christian ministries, families, sidewalk counselors, and other pro-lifers at every turn.

Pro-abortion governors like Gavin Newsom, along with his counterparts, J.B. Pritzker, and Kathy Hochul, are pressing forward on their respective warpaths.

And the abortionists and their well-funded lawyers are targeting our clients, and they need you, their defender, to stand with them.

If the Lord has blessed you financially, please consider sending a gift of \$5,000, \$2,500, or \$1,000. I'm also praying that one hero will step forward with a gift of \$10,000, five heroes with \$5,000, and ten heroes with \$1,000. Gifts in that range are tremendous blessings.

I'll be grateful for your sacrifice—no matter how large or how small! Every gift matters in this fight.

Your prayers and generosity sustain our mission and keep us on the front lines, from local courtrooms all the way up to the Supreme Court. May God bless you and your loved ones in His own best way!

Yours faithfully,



Tom Brejcha
Founder and President
Thomas More Society

P.S. If you'd like to support our mission for the long-haul, please prayerfully consider joining our **Defenders Circle** by choosing the option to make a "Monthly" gift. Recurring gifts like these are extremely helpful in sustaining and fortifying our mission against all threats.

P.P.S. Your generous tax-deductible gift today supports our entire mission at Thomas More Society, from the cases cited in this letter to plenty of other battles we are fighting for pro-life, pro-family, and pro-freedom heroes—whose stories I am unable to fit into this September letter!