

ACLU Defending Christmas

The ACLU strongly supports the rights of individuals, families, and faith communities to celebrate their seasonal holidays, whether publicly or in private. While fighting to ensure that the government does not play favorites with religion, we also vigorously defend the rights all people to express and celebrate their beliefs, during the holiday season and throughout the year. Below are several examples of ACLU advocacy on behalf of people who celebrate Christmas. For other recent ACLU cases defending the free exercise of religion, [click here](#).

The ACLU of New Hampshire (2015) filed suit on behalf of a prisoner's mother and three-year-old son against a prison policy that prohibits Christmas cards, prayer cards, and drawings sent through the mail.

<http://aclu-nh.org/aclu-of-nh-challenges-state-prison-ban-on-mailed-christmas-cards-prayer-cards-and-childrens-drawings/>

The ACLU of Pennsylvania (2015) interceded on behalf of a Christian inmate seeking to have a communal prayer during the Christmas holiday.

http://www.pennlive.com/news/2015/11/settlement_gives_camp_hill_chr.html

The ACLU of Pennsylvania (2012) filed a brief in support of a fifth grader's right to share her religious beliefs with classmates by distributing invitations to a Christmas party hosted by a local church.

<http://www.ca3.uscourts.gov/opinarch/121728p.pdf>

The ACLU of Texas (2011) filed a brief in support of students in the Plano school district who wanted to include Christian messages in their holiday gift bags.

<http://www.aclutx.org/blog/?p=706>

The ACLU of Massachusetts (2003) intervened on behalf of a group of students at Westfield High School who were suspended for distributing candy canes and a religious message in school. The ACLU succeeded in having the suspensions revoked and filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a lawsuit brought on behalf of the students against the school district.

<http://www.aclu.org/studentsrights/expression/12828prs20030221.html>

The ACLU of Rhode Island (2003) interceded on behalf of an interdenominational group of carolers who were told they could not sing Christmas carols on Christmas Eve to inmates at the women's prison in Cranston, Rhode Island.

The ACLU of Massachusetts (2002) filed a brief supporting the right of the Church of the Good News to run ads criticizing the secularization of Christmas and promoting Christianity as the "one true religion." The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority had refused to allow the paid advertisements to be posted and refused to sell additional advertising space to the church.

<https://www.aclu.org/free-speech/aclu-defends-churchs-right-run-anti-santa-ads-boston-subways>

The ACLU of Virginia (1999) represented Rita Warren and her right to erect a crèche on Fairfax County government space that had been set aside as a public forum. The ACLU argued that

restricting the use of the public forum to county residents only was an unreasonable restriction. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed.

The ACLU of Massachusetts (1996) filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts on behalf of two women who were fired for refusing, on religious grounds, to work at a racetrack on Christmas Day.