



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 14, 2012

Federal Judge Rules Against Pro-Life License Plates

A federal judge has sided with Planned Parenthood in a lawsuit over North Carolina's "Choose Life" license plates, ruling that they are unconstitutional and thus forbidden. In his December 7 opinion, U.S. District Court Judge James Fox wrote that such a plate, "in the absence of a pro-choice plate constitutes viewpoint discrimination in violation of the First Amendment."



Officials of Planned Parenthood in North Carolina were reportedly opposed to the plates because some of the funds from sales of the plates were slated to go to pro-life groups that help to save the lives of mothers and pre-born babies, something they found unacceptable.

Planned Parenthood's grievance was given voice through the ACLU of North Carolina, which filed the suit on behalf of the pro-abortion group. Referring to the pro-life license plates as a "scheme," ACLU spokesman Chris Brook remarked that Fox's ruling was a "great victory for the free speech rights of all North Carolinians.... The government cannot create an avenue of expression for one side of a contentious political issue while denying an equal opportunity to citizens with the opposite view."

In 2011 North Carolina's General Assembly approved the creation of 80 specialty license plates, including the pro-life ones. The plates were to cost \$25 each with \$15 of that amount going to the [Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship](#), a group of non-profit pregnancy counseling centers. The pro-life group was to collect applications for the license plates, with 300 requests needed for the state to move ahead with producing them. While a total of 369 applications came in, production of the plates was put on hold because of the suit, and the money was refunded.

North Carolina's [Christian Action League](#) had worked for several years to help get the pro-life plates in the state. Mark Creech, the group's director, said that similar pro-life plates are available in at least 28 other states, while "pro-choice" plates have made it in only four. "We have more than 150 specialty plates in our state," Creech noted, "including an Animal Lovers plate, a Save the Sea Turtles plate, and Friends of the Great Smoky Mountains plate. Does this ruling mean lawmakers should also have approved plates for Animal Haters, Kill the Sea Turtles, and Enemies of the Smokies? The ruling is absolutely absurd!"

Wondered Creech: "Where in the First Amendment does it mandate that every viewpoint be allowed equal representation? If this is really the case, why can't we have prayer in the schools? Why can't Intelligent Design or Creationism be taught on human origins in our public schools? Why can't we hang the Ten Commandments in our nation's courtrooms?"

Creech said that the North Carolina's Planned Parenthood crowd had the same opportunity to lobby for pro-abortion license plates. "For those eight or nine years when pro-life groups were seemingly getting nowhere with lawmakers, where were the abortion folks?" he asked. "They could have been right there pushing for their own tag. But they waited until Choose Life was in the homestretch and then demanded the fruits of the pro-life camp's labor."



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[OneNewsNow.com](#) recalled that when the “Choose Life” bill was making its way through the North Carolina legislature, pro-abortion groups attempted to get a half dozen amendments attached to the measure, floating such pro-abortion license plate slogans as “Trust Women. Respect Choice.” All of the amendments were rejected by lawmakers.

Creech is encouraging North Carolina’s attorney general to appeal the ruling, as is the sponsor of the “Choose Life” bill, Republican State Representative Mitch Gillespie, who said that “as long as I am in the General Assembly, my goal will be to get [the plates] passed.”

Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, told [American Family Radio](#) that pro-abortion groups tried to stop a similar measure that he had co-authored years ago as a Louisiana state legislator. The measure “was challenged in court under the same argument that it’s discriminating because it doesn’t allow the other side to have a voice,” he recalled. He noted that abortion groups have the same opportunity to lobby legislators for their own plates, but are almost never able to find state lawmakers who are “crazy enough” to sponsor a bill that would include pro-abortion plates.

Perkins said the frustrating thing is that “simply because they can’t muster any public support for their aberrant views, they say it’s discrimination.” He noted, however, that “other lower-level courts have decided the same way [as Fox], but were overturned on appeal. So hopefully North Carolina will join the other states that have the same provision for the pro-life plates....”



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