

Pastor John MacArthur & Grace Community Church Sue State of California

Thomas More Society Protecting Church Against Unconstitutional and Unreasonable "Health" Restrictions

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(August 12, 2020 – Los Angeles, California) Thomas More Society Special Counsel [Jenna Ellis](#) and [Charles LiMandri](#) filed suit in the Superior Court of the State of California County of Los Angeles on behalf of Pastor John MacArthur and Grace Community Church against Governor Gavin Newsom, Attorney General Xavier Becerra, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, and other California and Los Angeles County public health officials.

The suit seeks to prohibit California from enforcing its unconstitutional and onerous coronavirus pandemic regulations against Grace Community Church and seeks a judgment that the health orders violate the California Constitution.

The complaint states that the American people have begun to see that they are being cheated by their own government. “They have witnessed how the onerous restrictions imposed on them by public officials to allegedly fight the COVID-19 pandemic simply do not apply to certain, favored groups. When many went to the streets to engage in ‘political protests’ against ‘racism’ and ‘police brutality,’ these protestors refused to comply with the pandemic restrictions. Instead of enforcing the public health orders, public officials were all too eager to grant a de facto exception for these favored protestors.”

“Having irreparably damaged the confidence of Americans - and Californians especially - who now realize that the pandemic restrictions are neither necessary nor good, on Sunday, July 26, 2020, Grace Community Church decided to resume worship services—joining millions of Americans in deciding that *enough is enough*. With deaths from the ‘COVID-19 suicide pandemic’ exceeding those from the actual coronavirus pandemic, Grace Community Church decided that it would no longer sit by and watch its congregants and their children suffer from an absence of religious worship and instruction. Perhaps unsurprisingly - perhaps not - this led the County of Los Angeles to submit [a demand letter](#) to Grace Community Church, ordering it to comply with the restrictions that Los Angeles County deems unnecessary to enforce against so many others. Grace Community Church does not intend to comply.”

It is time for California to recognize that Christians are not second-class citizens, and the court must step in to do its job applying the protections the U.S. and California State Constitutions provide to every individual equally and to churches in particular.

Pastor MacArthur opened the Sunday morning service on August 9, welcoming worshippers to “the Grace Community Church peaceful protest.” He was met with a standing ovation and extended applause from the congregation. Pastor MacArthur said of the lawsuit, “We are simply continuing to do today what we have done for the past 63 years that Grace Community Church has been open to welcome the Los Angeles community and serve their spiritual needs. We will remain open and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all who decide they want to come worship with us.”

Ellis said, “We hoped that Los Angeles County would see its error on its own, but after attempted negotiations with their counsel, California is still intent on targeting churches—specifically, Grace Community Church. Pastor MacArthur and the Board of Elders will stand firm in their leadership and resolve that church is essential, and California has no legitimate power to enforce such onerous and unconstitutional restrictions against the fundamentally protected right to freely participate in church. After Grace Community Church voluntarily complied with state orders for nearly six months, California’s edicts demanding an indefinite shut down have gone

now far past rational or reasonable and are firmly in the territory of tyranny and discrimination. This isn't about health. It's about blatantly targeting churches.”

LiMandri stated, “It is unconstitutional for Governor Newsom and the State of California to discriminate against churches by treating them less favorably than other organizations and activities that are not protected by the First Amendment. Pastor MacArthur and his church, as well as all churches, are entitled to practice their religion without government interference. This is especially the case when the government has given free rein to protestors, and is not similarly restricting marijuana dispensaries, large retail outlets and factories, and abortion providers. The government orders are also unconstitutional because there is no compelling need for the onerous restrictions on the churches at this time. The hospitals are not overwhelmed and the percentage death rate from COVID-19 is now extremely small. It is time for Governor Newsom and Mayor Garcetti to recognize what President Trump has already proclaimed: Churches are providing an ‘essential’ service to the people. Therefore, they must be allowed to serve the people in the manner in which God has called them.”

Read the Thomas More Society's Complaint filed with the Superior Court for the State of California County of Los Angeles – North Central District in *Grace Community Church and Pastor John MacArthur v. Gavin Newsome et al.*, on August 12, 2020, [here](#).

Read the Demand Letter sent to Pastor John MacArthur by attorney Jason Tokoro, representing the County of Los Angeles in California, on July 29, 2020, [here](#) [https://www.thomasmoresociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Ex.-5-1_Cease-and-Desist-Letter.pdf]

About the Thomas More Society

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