

## **Thomas More Society Petitions U.S. Supreme Court to Allow 'Choose Life' Illinois License Plates**

*Petition says U.S. Seventh Circuit decision violates Illinois Citizens' free speech rights*

**CHICAGO, April 16** /Christian Newswire/ -- Today the Chicago-based Thomas More Society filed a petition asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review and reverse a decision prohibiting the issuance and sale of "Choose Life" specialty license plates in Illinois. This decision was handed down last November, when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (Chicago) rejected a claim by Choose Life Illinois, Inc. (CLI) that the State's refusal to approve a specialty license plate bearing the words "Choose Life" violated the First Amendment.

"We expected that this issue would have to be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court," said Tom Brejcha, president of the Thomas More Society and chief counsel for CLI et. al. "The right of Arizona citizens to purchase 'Choose Life' specialty plates was recently upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that denial of the plates constituted 'viewpoint discrimination.' The Seventh Circuit held the contrary, yet the First Amendment must mean the same thing throughout the entire United States."

While the odds against the Supreme Court agreeing to hear any given appeal may seem overwhelming (only 1 of every 120 petitions has been granted in recent years), Brejcha and the other CLI lawyers are optimistic.

"If anything, our clients' claim against Illinois is overripe for review," continues Brejcha. "Our petition for review highlights the fact that litigation concerning the 'Choose Life' plates over the last ten years has created a patchwork of conflicting decisions. We will be greatly surprised, as well as disappointed, if the Court fails to grant review."

### **Background of Illinois "Choose Life" Plates**

Over 25,000 Illinois citizens had signed petitions for the "Choose Life" plate, sale proceeds of which were to fund Illinois adoption agencies to help children find lifetime homes with loving families. However, Illinois authorities stymied efforts to get the plate approved, even though scores of other specialty plates, ranging from supporting troops or peace to celebrating college fraternities, were approved routinely.

After the "Choose Life" petitions were submitted, bills introduced in the Illinois General Assembly were diverted to a special subcommittee, chaired by then State Senator Barack Obama, where they died without any hearing.

**A COMPLETE COPY OF THE PETITION IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

### *About the Thomas More Society*

*The Thomas More Society Pro-Life Law Center is a public interest law firm in Chicago that counsels and defends those who work to protect innocent human life, defends those who proclaim faith-based values in our nation's public square, and strives to protect the institution of marriage as a union of man and woman formed to beget, bear and nurture new human lives. For more information, please visit: [www.thomasmoresociety.org](http://www.thomasmoresociety.org).*