# Shutts & Bowen Attorneys Argue First Amendment Rights Before the United States Supreme Court

Tallahassee
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In an amicus brief filed on behalf of client Awaken Church, Shutts & Bowen LLP attorneys Elise Engle, Denise Harle, and Thomasina Moore joined a broad coalition supporting Cambridge Christian School in its petition against the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA), arguing that the government-speech doctrine should not override the Free Exercise Clause.

The case involves the intersection of government speech and the free exercise of religion. In the brief, Shutts attorneys argue that the government-speech doctrine, which exempts government speech from First Amendment scrutiny, has been questioned by judges and scholars for its legitimacy and strict application. They argue that a bright-line application of the government-speech doctrine could erode First Amendment rights, particularly the Free Exercise Clause, by excluding religious viewpoints from public platforms.

The brief advises that if the Court grants the petition for writ of certiorari, it could impact pending cases involving similar issues by providing necessary guidance on the intersection of government speech and free exercise rights. The Shutts attorneys conclude by urging the Court to clarify that the government-speech doctrine does not always defeat a Free Exercise claim, which would help resolve ongoing legal confusion and protect religious expression.

## About Shutts & Bowen LLP

Shutts & Bowen LLP, established in 1910, is a full-service business law firm with approximately 280 lawyers in offices in Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Sarasota, Tallahassee, Tampa and West Palm Beach. Learn more about Shutts & Bowen at www.shutts.com.

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