



## Advocates Win Settlement Ending Anti-LGBTQ+ Ordinance in Murfreesboro, TN

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American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Tennessee, Ballard Spahr, and Burr & Forman have settled a lawsuit filed against the City of Murfreesboro over its anti-LGBTQ+ ordinance and local policy denying all special event permit requests from the Tennessee Equality Project (TEP), founder and host of the annual BoroPride Festival.

As part of the settlement, the city has agreed to pay \$500,000 to compensate for harm caused and reimburse attorneys' fees, repeal the anti-LGBTQ+ ordinance, and accept and process any future event permit applications from TEP. City Manager Craig Tindall, who issued the ban on TEP permits last year, is prohibited under the terms from reviewing any future TEP permit requests.

"We celebrate the resolution of this case because it has guaranteed the rollback of a discriminatory policy and affirmed our right to host BoroPride," said TEP executive director, Chris Sanders. "Now we can turn our attention to preparing for the 2024 BoroPride festival and defending the rights of LGBTQ+ Tennesseans at the state legislature. Our gratitude goes to the LGBTQ+ community for standing with us and to the legal advocates who championed the defense of free speech and expression."

The parties filed suit in federal court after Mr. Tindall and Murfreesboro Mayor Shane McFarland engaged in a yearlong, concerted anti-LGBTQ+ campaign to chill TEP and Murfreesboro residents' protected speech and expression. The campaign culminated in the city establishing an official policy prohibiting the issuance of permits to TEP; discriminatorily and unconstitutionally

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denying TEP's request for a permit for 2023 BoroPride; and implementing a sweeping and vague ordinance designed to censor any LGBTQ+ speech or conduct within the Murfreesboro community and from TEP. The ordinance was also cited as an attempt to justify banning multiple LGBTQ+ books from Murfreesboro public libraries.

In light of the settlement, the parties are filing a dismissal of the case, bringing the lawsuit to a close.