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For Immediate Release: July 12, 2010
Total Pages: 2

Crucial Federal Court Hearing Tomorrow on Controversial “Leaving Islam” Bus Ad

ANN ARBOR, MI – Federal District Court Judge Denise Page Hood will hold a hearing on Tuesday, July 12, 2010 at 2:00pm to determine whether refusal by the SMART bus authority to run a controversial paid-for ad passes constitutional muster.

The “Leaving Islam” ad lists a web address and states, *“Fatwa on your head? Is your family or community threatening you? Leaving Islam? Got questions? Get Answers!”*

A motion for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) [[Click here to read motion](#)] was filed in the federal lawsuit against the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) by the Thomas More Law Center, a national public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan and attorney David Yerushalmi, P.C. on behalf of the ad’s sponsors, the Freedom Defense Initiative (FDI) and its officers, Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer.

Although Judge Hood denied FDI’s TRO motion without prejudice, she scheduled tomorrow’s hearing to determine FDI’s Motion for Preliminary Injunction. [[Click here to read Judge Hood’s Order](#)] FDI attorneys expect to call at least two SMART officials to testify at tomorrow’s hearing.

FDI’s ad campaign follows on the heels of the Rifqa Barry story, the seventeen-year-old Ohio girl, who fearing for her life, ran away from home after her parents discovered she had converted to Christianity. Traditional Islamic law prescribes the penalty of death if a Muslim leaves his or her religion.

SMART authorities had earlier allowed an atheist group's ads on its buses, "***Don't Believe in God? You are not alone,***" yet, without giving any explanation, it refused the "Leaving Islam" ads.

FDI's motion asks Judge Hood to order SMART to allow display of the "Leaving Islam" ads on the grounds that refusing to display the ads violated First Amendment rights to engage in political and religious speech.

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