

ACLU Wisconsin: The City of La Crosse is working to amend its ordinance restricting political signs

Posted on Tuesday, Jan 30, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT: Cassandra Bowers, ACLU of Wisconsin
414-272-4032 x 217
media@aclu-wi.org

La Crosse, WI – The City of La Crosse has rescinded an order for a resident to remove a yard sign promoting the impeachment of the President and plans to amend its ordinance regarding political signs after it was put on notice by the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin that the regulations infringe on residents' First Amendment right to free speech.

In a letter to the city's legal department, the ACLU of Wisconsin said the city acted improperly and suppressed constitutionally-protected speech when it ordered resident Dennis Lawrence to remove his yard sign promoting the impeachment of the President.

"Like all Americans, Mr. Lawrence has a right to express his political views without interference or intimidation by the government," said Chris Ott, Executive Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin. "We are pleased that the city has agreed to stop interfering with Mr. Lawrence's ability to exercise his right to free speech in his own home and will amend its sign."

Even though Mr. Lawrence's sign was on his private property, he was nonetheless ordered by the city to remove his sign. The ACLU of Wisconsin noted in a letter that the ordinance did not apply, and even if it did, it would be an unconstitutional restriction on the freedom of speech by attempting to suppress the displays of

political signs on private property.

“Political speech, receives the highest degree of First Amendment protection,” said ACLU of Wisconsin staff attorney Asma Kadri. “The city’s ordinance singled out political and campaign signs and applied restrictions to those signs that don’t apply to other kinds of signs. We are encouraged that La Crosse is revisiting its unconstitutional ordinance and hope their new laws protect the right to free speech.”

A copy of the letter is available here:

https://aclu-wi.org/sites/default/files/261017_LaCrosse.pdf

Founded in 1930, the ACLU of Wisconsin is a private, nonpartisan organization with more than 24,000 supporters, who reside in every county in the state. For more information, see aclu-wi.org.