



1851 Center for Constitutional Law

Defending Constitutional Rights | Limiting Government

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Ohioans' Rights**

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A non-profit, non-partisan law firm dedicated to protecting the constitutional rights of Ohioans from government. The 1851 Center litigates constitutional issues related to property rights, taxpayer and entrepreneur rights, regulation, parental rights, and search and seizure.

Our Mission Statement

A note from the founder about our mission:

We founded 1851 to actively defend Ohioans' right to do anything peaceful. We believe dignity, choice, respect, and freedom are moral imperatives, central to human flourishing. And we can all see how the heavy-handed control of others hampers imperatives and this flourishing. Yet each day throughout our state, government officials treat Ohioans like children, micro-manage their choices, pilfer their hard-earned wealth and property, and auction off their freedom to the highest bidder. To defend against these threats, and to level a highly unbalanced playing field, we represent those who aren't represented by a special interest group. In essence, we are a special interest group against all of the "special interests" who wish to control Ohioans' time, money, property, and lives.

We represent those who simply wish to be left alone to order their lives, families, finances, businesses, and time in an entirely peaceful manner.

Accordingly we represent the average Ohio taxpayer, parent, homeowner, and entrepreneur, when they find themselves threatened with loss of their homes and businesses, and threatened with fines and jail time for peaceful acts such as the sale or lease of a home, posting of a protest sign, the gathering of signatures, the refusal to pay a tax or fee, or the refusal to abide by an arbitrary government mandate. Our clients are those with the dignity to refrain from living as a parasite. And those with the resolve to recognize when their government is treating them as the equivalent of a milk-cow, rather than a coequal.

Before we founded the 1851 Center, the legal system had entirely failed these people.

Ohio has no shortage of lawyers. Yet these lawyers cater to the wealthy. They have conflicts of interest because instead of *fighting* government, they all want to *represent* government, or perhaps even be part of it someday. When they become aware of an illegal \$70 tax or fee, they want a \$10,000 retainer. Meanwhile, those who *have* traditionally offered *pro bono* services in Ohio do so to shred the fundamental tenets of human freedom rather than to protect them.

To correct this market failure, we have created a public interest law firm that cannot be bought. One that allows the average Ohioan to stand on equal footing with well-funded and well-connected bullies, without ever having to pay a legal bill.

From Portsmouth to Cleveland and Youngstown to Cincinnati, and without regard politics, we speak for those without an effective means to speak for themselves. And we give outsiders a fighting chance to protect what is rightfully their own.

Maurice A. Thompson
Executive Director