



BURKE WARREN SECURES WIN FOR CLIENT IN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY APPEALS CASE

January 13, 2022 | News

Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, P.C. secured a win for firm client Evangelical Covenant Church (“ECC”) in a religious liberty appeal before the First District Appellate Court of Illinois on January 12, 2022. In the case, an ECC minister sued the ECC alleging that he lost his position as pastor of a congregation due to the ECC’s allegedly slow and careless investigation of an accusation of child sexual assault against him. The Circuit Court of Cook County dismissed the pastor’s complaint finding that the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine and the ministerial exception barred his claims for breach of contract and intentional interference with economic advantage, and he failed to adequately state those claims. On appeal the pastor argued that the Circuit Court’s dismissal of his complaint was in error. The First District Appellate Court of Illinois affirmed the Circuit Court’s decision in ruling against the plaintiff, holding the First Amendment protected the ECC’s right to conduct its clergy investigation and discipline process without interference from secular courts. Burke Warren partner **Susan Miller Overbey** handled this case on behalf of our client Evangelical Covenant Church. Access the full opinion at <https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/top-level-opinions/>.

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