

THOMAS MORE LAW CENTER

IMPACT: The Thomas More Law Center (TMLC) is a registered non-profit that represents the legal interests of Christian individuals contesting public school curriculum about Islam and Muslim-majority regions of the world, and has represented notable anti-Muslim figures in court. The law firm uses the threat of extended litigation to coerce school districts into modifying curriculum and propagates the conspiracy theory that Muslims seek to sabotage the U.S. through “civilizational jihad.”

- Established in December 1998, the **Thomas More Law Center’s stated mission is to “restore and defend America’s Judeo-Christian heritage and moral values; and to preserve a strong national defense, and a free and sovereign United States of America.”** TMLC also claims to defend “American family values” against “Hollywood, secular media, and radical homosexual groups who demand the legalization of same-sex marriage.” The firm is involved in prominent cases defending Christian religious freedom on issues of abortion, same-sex marriage, and public displays of Christian religious symbols. The firm also invokes the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment in several prominent cases attempting to alter or block the teaching of Islam in public schools.
- According to 2017 financial statements, TMLC is a registered tax-exempt non-profit in Ann Arbor, Michigan that has 17 employees, over 786 pro-bono attorneys, and annual contributions of over \$1.7 million. It was **established by the current director of TMLC and founder of Domino’s Pizza, Thomas Monaghan, and the current president of TMLC, Richard Thompson.** Robert L. Bunting, of the Law Firm of Robert L. Bunting, is also listed as a co-director.
- **Thomas Monaghan, TMLC’s primary financial backer, is one of the biggest benefactors of conservative Catholic causes in the U.S. through the Ave Maria Foundation, and the founder of Ave Maria University,** which in February 2012 filed suit against the federal government to challenge the Affordable Care Act’s mandate that employers’ health insurance provides birth control coverage. While *Ave Maria University v. Sebelius* is still pending, the Trump Administration in October 2017 rolled back the federal requirement in question. Monaghan cites his Catholic faith as the inspiration behind his philanthropy, and is a signatory of the Bill and Melinda Gates Giving Pledge, in which the world’s wealthiest individuals commit at least half of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes.
- **Richard Thompson, the president of TMLC, represented a Maryland student who claimed that a history lesson on Islam violated her Christian beliefs.** In February 2019, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled that the curriculum did not violate the U.S. Constitution nor advocate any particular religion.
- **In January 2018, TMLC filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of a New Jersey middle schooler and his mother, claiming that a set of videos assigned to seventh-graders were seeking “to convert its viewers to Islam” and violated first-amendment rights.** Thompson called the curriculum “insidious Islamic propagandizing” and part of the debunked conspiracy theory of “civilization jihad.” In June 2018, a federal judge ruled that the lawsuit could proceed.
- **In 2013, TMLC threatened an Ohio school district with a federal lawsuit over the use of a documentary in a 7th grade history class that depicted a Christian man living as a Muslim for one month.** The school district subsequently pulled the video from the curriculum.
- **TMLC filed a lawsuit in 2016 contesting the no-trespass order issued against a high-school student’s father in Ann Arbor, Michigan.** The father, John Kevin Wood, made obscene and threatening comments to school officials over an assignment about the Muslim-majority regions of the world that his daughter had

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refused to complete. After continued social media posts about the issue, [the school attained a no-trespass order against him](#).

- **In 2016, the services of TMLC were [retained by Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Dooley, who was removed from his teaching assignment at the Joint Forces Staff College](#). Dooley’s course, titled “Perspectives on Islam and Islamic Radicalism,” came [under fire after](#) the course’s content was released. It included a [powerpoint](#) that stated that in the “near ‘total war’” with the “Muslim Umma,” the Geneva Conventions are “no longer relevant,” “leav[ing] open the option once again of taking war to a civilian population.” Dooley suggested “destruction” of Mecca and Medina, two of the holiest cities in Islam, citing as “precedents” the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1945, the U.S. military [dropped](#) atomic bombs over these cities, killing nearly a quarter of a million human beings. TMLC [threatened legal action](#) against Dooley’s commanding officers; however, [there is no indication](#) that a lawsuit has been filed. Dooley has since been [reassigned](#) to the Fort Eustis base in Virginia.**
- **TMLC, on behalf of [Terry Jones, a pastor known for his Islamophobic rhetoric and threats to burn the Quran, appealed a court’s decision in 2011 to block Jones from speaking against “Jihad, Sharia Law, and the radicalization of Muslims in America” in front of the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan](#). In 2012, TMLC [represented Jones](#) again, which resulted in a U.S. [district court decision](#) that the City of Dearborn had violated Jones’s First Amendment rights by requiring him to sign an indemnification agreement before being permitted to rally in front of the Dearborn Islamic Center.**
- **In a “[first-of-its-kind](#)” suit, TMLC [sued the Department of State on behalf of the state of Tennessee over the U.S. government’s requirement that the plaintiff provide Medicaid benefits to refugees](#). Propagating an anti-Muslim conspiracy theory, TMLC [called refugee resettlement a “Muslim Invasion” that would cause the “destruction of America’s values.”](#) A federal judge [dismissed the lawsuit](#) in March 2018. In a statement on the case, the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee [stated](#) that the TMLC is “known for its radical anti-Muslim ideology.”**
- **TMLC [backed a lawsuit attempting to block the construction of a mosque in Bernards Township in New Jersey](#). Before a federal judge dismissed the lawsuit, TMLC President Thompson [stated](#) that the township “[colluded with ISBR’s \[Islamic Society of Basking Ridge\] ‘Civilization Jihad’](#)” in its efforts to allow the mosque to be constructed.**
- Following the Subway franchise’s decision to [modify](#) 200 of its stores in the U.K. to be halal-compliant, the TMLC [criticized the “stealth jihad” and “murderous ideology” of “radical Islam” by quoting Winston Churchill’s description of Islam as “austere, intolerant, well armed, and bloodthirsty.”](#)
- On the twelfth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks, TMLC [released](#) a statement calling for the U.S. to “**keep the flame of retribution burning until Radical Islam is wiped from the face of the Earth.**”
- Robert Muise [worked](#) at the Thomas More Law Center before founding the [American Freedom Law Center](#), another anti-Muslim law firm, with [David Yerushalmi](#). **The board of the TMLC also [includes notable anti-Muslim figures Michele Bachmann and Allen West](#).**