



6/22/2010

I received a report from someone at the Hall County Commissioner work session that Commissioner Bobby Banks wants to have politicians apply for a permit to knock on doors. Is that sweat I see? Did the Lutz Do It team cause you some anxiety when we went through your neighborhood this past weekend?

What will a commissioner propose to hold onto their job? Will they go so far as to pass a law prohibiting free speech? Well, thank goodness the Supreme Court has already prohibited what you suggested today. To refresh your memory: Watchtower Bible & Tract Society of New York v. Village of Stratton, No. 00-1737 (June 17, 2002). In this 8-1 decision, Justice John Paul Stevens wrote; "It is offensive -- not only to the values protected by the First Amendment, but to the very notion of a free society -- that ... a citizen must first inform the government of her desire to speak to (their) neighbors". In Thomas v. Collins, 323 U. S. 516 (1945) the court went on to say, "As a matter of principle a requirement of registration in order to make a public speech would seem generally incompatible with an exercise of the rights of free speech and free assembly...".

"If the exercise of the rights of free speech and free assembly cannot be made a crime, we do not think this can be accomplished by the device of requiring previous registration as a condition for exercising them and making such a condition the foundation for restraining in advance their exercise and for imposing a penalty for violating such a restraining order. So long as no more is involved than exercise of the rights of free speech and free assembly, it is immune to such a restriction. If one who solicits support for the cause of labor may be required to register as a condition to the exercise of his right to make a public speech, so may he who seeks to rally support for any social, business, religious or political cause. We think a requirement that one must register before he undertakes to make a public speech to enlist support for a lawful movement is quite incompatible with the requirements of the First Amendment." *Id.*, at 539-540.

The notion that the commission would consider limiting free speech in order to retain their power is appalling. So I have an idea, let's meet on Saturday and exercise some free speech by knocking on some doors. Lutz Do It!

