



Graves Garrett LLC

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Burton Taylor

Email: btaylor@proventusconsulting.com

Phone: 816.812.7135

U.S. District Court Certifies Class Action against the IRS by Tea Party Groups

A Class of More Than 200 Tea Party Groups Seek Damages against the IRS for Unlawful Targeting

January 12, 2016 – Graves Garrett LLC is pleased to announce that the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio has certified the class action brought by their clients against the Internal Revenue Service. The plaintiff Tea Party groups sued the IRS for violating their First Amendment rights by discriminating and retaliating against them during the tax-exempt application process. The groups also seek damages against the IRS for violating a taxpayer privacy statute. With certification of the class, the representative groups now assert claims on behalf of at least 200 other groups that the IRS targeted.

“This decision represents a significant step forward for obtaining relief for Tea Party groups that were identified, segregated, and harassed by the IRS solely because of their viewpoints,” said Edward Greim, who with Todd Graves and Dane Martin served as counsel. “It is also the culmination of nearly two years of class discovery into the scope and harm of the IRS’s conduct, including ten sworn depositions of the IRS and its agents in Washington, D.C. and Cincinnati, Ohio, and the IRS’s production of thousands of pages of documents.” In briefs, the Tea Party groups cited to evidence showing that the IRS’s conduct was not benign, but instead an orchestrated effort designed to hinder the effectiveness of Tea Party groups, prevent their access to the courts, and forcefully disclose their private donor information.

The lawsuit, *NorCal Tea Party Patriots v. Internal Revenue Service*, was the first lawsuit filed against the IRS relating to its handling of applications for tax-exemption by Tea Party groups. The case will now proceed to merits discovery and trial concerning liability and damages. The Tea Party groups are also represented by co-counsel David Langdon of Langdon Law, LLC, Christopher Finney of the Finney Law Firm, LLC, and Bill and Bev Randles of Randles & Splittgerber Law Office. The case is being funded by Citizens for Self-Governance, a nonprofit that supports grassroots citizens’ groups across the country.

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Graves Garrett specializes in complex commercial litigation, free speech and civil rights litigation, and white collar criminal defense. The firm frequently represents candidates, corporations, individuals, nonprofit educational and advocacy corporations, and political committees.

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