



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ACLU NEGOTIATING TO PROTECT FREE SPEECH RIGHTS  
OF ANTI-WAR PROTESTORS**

*ACLU Sends Letter to Mayor and Chief of Police*

ST. PETERSBURG –Today, the ACLU faxed a letter to the St. Petersburg Mayor and Chief of Police expressing its intent to defend the First Amendment rights of protesters and their supporters. The letter voices a concern about the city’s interference with the rights of protesters near BayWalk. The ACLU and representatives of St. Pete for Peace are expected to meet tomorrow with police officials to address how the First Amendment rights of anti-war demonstrators will be protected.

The Pinellas Chapter of the ACLU voted this week to defend the First Amendment rights of protesters and their supporters in Pinellas County. St. Pete for Peace has been staging antiwar demonstrations every Saturday night for over two years at BayWalk, St. Petersburg’s downtown shopping and entertainment complex. The venue’s owners have objected to the demonstrators and persuaded St. Petersburg police to erect barricades that restrict the demonstrators’ ability to gain access to public sidewalks.

“Those barricades signaled a new climate of hostility between police and demonstrators,” states Mark Kamleiter, a local attorney and member of the ACLU’s Pinellas Legal Panel who is serving as cooperating attorney. “Police attitudes toward the demonstrators have been openly confrontational, with arrests taking place and motorists being ticketed for merely tooting their horns in support.”

“The ACLU cares deeply about the constitutional right guarantee that people have the freedom to assemble and to exchange ideas about the direction their government is taking,” points out West Central Florida Regional Director Rebecca Steele. “We will be there to support St. Pete for Peace and their right to speak freely for as long as they want to keep demonstrating,” concluded Kamleiter.

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