



For Immediate Release:
Tuesday February 11, 2025,
Birthday of Rev. Jarena Lee

For more information, contact council@masscouncilofchurches.org

MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SUES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Boston, MA: On Tuesday February 11, 2025, the [Massachusetts Council of Churches](https://www.masscouncilofchurches.org) joined over two dozen Christian and Jewish institutions and the [Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection](https://www.institute-for-constitutional-advocacy-and-protection.org) in opposition to the federal government's rescission of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's sensitive locations policy, which violates the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, protecting our places of worship Link: <https://www.masscouncilofchurches.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/More-Than-Two-Dozen-Christian-and-Jewish-Denominations-and-Associations-Sue-to-Protect-Religious-Freedoms.pdf>

Recently, on January 24, 2025, the Massachusetts Council of Churches Board of Directors and over 20 heads of church issued a [common statement opposing the rescission of sensitive locations policy](#), saying:

“Churches are, and have always been, places of prayer, solace, and safety since the time of Jesus Christ; this does not change with any new emperor, king, or president.

Churches are houses of prayer for all people, as the Prophet Isaiah proclaims. These houses of prayer for all people are, and must remain, places where all people can gather without fear, intimidation, or threat of violence. All who gather in houses of worship must be able to do so freely, based on our American values and the free exercise of religion.”

Following the filing of the lawsuit, Massachusetts Council of Churches Executive Director Rev. Laura Everett said, “Every Christian agrees that Jesus said you must love your neighbor and welcome the stranger. We must be able to do this to practice our faith. The current administration is preventing us from doing so. Our churches must be able to freely worship and serve.”

In the days since the Department of Homeland Security rescinded the sensitive locations policy, churches across Massachusetts have seen a decrease in attendance in both worship and among those receiving social services. One majority immigrant church in Boston had 350 people in attendance the Sunday before the inauguration, and 150 people on the Sunday after the rescission.

Background: The Massachusetts Council of Churches is a network of individuals, congregations and denominations convinced that what binds us together in Christ is stronger than anything that might divide us. With eighteen Orthodox and Protestant member denominations, the Massachusetts Council of Churches is the state's largest ecumenical Christian network and the nation's oldest council of churches. The Massachusetts Council of Churches exists to make the vibrant Church visible.