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## Newsroom: Prayer Banner: What Would Roger Do?

Roger Williams University School of Law

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# Newsroom

## Prayer Banner: What Would Roger Do?

Dean David Logan talks to the Providence Journal about the Cranston prayer banner decision -- and what Rhode Island's founder might think of it.

**From the PROVIDENCE JOURNAL:** "[What would Roger Williams have done?](#)" by Ed Fitzpatrick



**January 29, 2012:** What would Roger Williams have thought about the prayer banner at Cranston High School West?

[...] **David A. Logan -- dean of the state's only law school, which is at a university named for Roger Williams -- said** Ahlquist fits into a tradition of courageous plaintiffs, exemplified by "the lonely pamphleteer," who adopt a minority viewpoint, face ostracism and harsh criticism and turn to the federal courts to vindicate their rights.

"Elsewhere in the world, if you're in the majority, you presume you get to impose your point of view on the minority," **Logan said**. In the United States, the majority does dictate in a lot of areas, but the Bill of Rights provides a "trump card" that protects minority viewpoints on certain matters, he said. "That was one of the revolutionary things about this country."

**Logan said** Senior U.S. District Judge Ronald R. Lagueux, who wrote the Jan. 11 decision, is "the latest in a long line of courageous federal judges who have protected the rights of the minority against the clear expressed preferences of the majority." And he said the banner case highlights how lifetime appointments provide federal judges with the independence to make rulings upholding minority rights.

**Logan said** the lawyers who represented Ahlquist also displayed courage in taking a case that was bound to be unpopular in the nation's most Catholic state -- a state which, despite its founder, has often been a battleground over church/state separation.

**Logan said** the legal principle at the heart of the banner case was not a new one, and given the facts of the case, it was not a close call. "In short, Judge Lagueux was planted squarely in the mainstream of constitutional law," **he said**. [...]

*For full story, click [here](http://law.rwu.edu/story/prayer-banner-what-would-roger-do). [http://law.rwu.edu/story/prayer-banner-what-would-roger-do]*