



Again Allowed

January 19, 2024

Retired engineer Wayne Nutt wants to be able to speak freely about engineering problems.

North Carolina, in the form of its Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, disagrees. The Board sought to prohibit his speech unless he obtained a professional license, and it threatened him with sanctions.

As Institute for Justice [puts it](#), the Board ordered Nutt “to stop talking about math in public.”

In response, Nutt sued, with IJ’s help.

Nutt often writes letters or speaks at public meetings to discuss problems with the designs of buildings and other structures. He also testified in court about flooding of a housing development.

This is what caught the attention of the Board, which claims that for Nutt to utter such testimony or any public statements enlisting his specialized knowledge is illegal, amounting to practicing engineering without a license.

“I like the freedom to be able to speak up,” Nutt [says](#).

I sympathize with this desire, as did the Founders who gave us the First Amendment to protect freedom of speech. Fortunately, so does Chief Judge Richard Myers of North Carolina’s Eastern District. He has just issued a favorable [ruling](#) in the case.

“This is a win for more than just me,” Nutt says. “There are a lot of people in the same situation — people who have expertise that they’ve been blocked from talking about. This decision is an affirmation that the First Amendment protects all of our rights to share what we know.”

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.