



Group Battles New York Transit Over Ad Censorship

Last Chance for Animals Hires Attorney Floyd Abrams to Protect First Amendment Rights

NEW YORK, NY--(Marketwired - May 20, 2015) - The Metropolitan Transit Authority has rejected a PSA billboard about the dangers of horse-drawn carriages, submitted April 30 by nonprofit animal rights organization Last Chance for Animals. In response, LCA has hired prominent First Amendment Attorney Floyd Abrams to protect their constitutional right to free speech.

The banned ad -- a joint effort of LCA and New York animal rights group NYClass -- was to replace an existing ad posted April 6 at City Hall Station. Since then, the MTA has issued new guidelines barring all political advertising. MTA agent Outfront Media rejected LCA's copy change, stating they were "unable to take any PSA related advertisers" (although the new guidelines only bar political, not PSA, ads).

Mr. Abrams' office delivered a letter Tuesday to Jeffrey B. Rosen, MTA's director of real estate, requesting a reversal of the rejection and demanding a written response by May 29th. [Read the letter here.](#)

- The banned ad features an image of a car and a horse-drawn carriage intertwined in a major collision. The text provides carriage-related safety statistics.
- Under the agreed-upon arrangement, LCA could change the content of their existing ad at will; this would have been the first copy change.
- Mr. Abrams and LCA maintain that the banned ad is a PSA and not political, and that the MTA's rejection denies LCA their constitutional rights. They also hold that the new guidelines should not apply retroactively to their existing contract.

"There is nothing pornographic, inciteful, or graphic in any way to be turned down by 'standards and practices' or anything else MTA had decided to impose," said LCA President and Founder Chris DeRose in a letter previously sent to Carmen Bianco, president of MTA NYC Transit.

"I signed the contract with the full understanding that LCA could change the ad copy at any time," said Nina Hauptman, director of campaigns for Last Chance for Animals. "Now our agreement has been broken, and our basic right to free speech denied. The MTA has no place blocking an ad about a public safety issue."

Last Chance for Animals is an international animal advocacy organization that conducts undercover investigations and launches public awareness campaigns to expose animal cruelty. LCA's Sam Simon Investigation Unit travels the world to document abuse in research labs, puppy mills, factory farms and the entertainment industry. www.LCAanimal.org