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## **For immediate release**

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### **Federal free-speech lawsuit filed to protect Marietta Labor Day parade marchers**

COLUMBUS -- Two members of Neighbors for Clean Air in Marietta, Ellyn Burnes and Florence Beidler, asked the U.S. District Court in Columbus, Ohio, to issue an injunction to secure their right to march in the 2008 Labor Day parade.

The defendants are the Washington County Fair Board, and Steve Tornes, who is both president of the Board and an employee of the Eramet Company. In 2007, the Board prevented Neighbors for Clean Air from marching in the parade wearing t-shirts bearing the words, "Eramet: Let's clear the air."

The lawsuit maintains that this action violated the plaintiffs' First Amendment free-speech rights.

Florence Beidler said, "We love the parade and the county fair, and we want to make sure it is always open to everyone. After last year's incident, we were delighted to see the community rally behind us, with 200 yard signs sprouting up all over the Marietta area. Each sign had the same message as the t-shirts. We are bringing this law suit to make sure that such a denial of free speech never happens again in Marietta."

The plaintiffs are represented by attorneys Edward Icové, Icové Legal Group, Ltd., Cleveland, and Daniel Kobil, Capital University Law School, Columbus. Professor Kobil observed that "the exclusion of the Neighbors for Clean Air from the parade because the Fair Board disagreed with their views is an outrage that violates America's most cherished values. Folks in Marietta are fortunate that Ms. Burnes and Ms. Beidler are willing to fight for the First Amendment rights of everyone."

*Attachment: Full text of legal complaint*