

Mass. city rescinds order to remove anti-Warren 'fake Indian' campaign signs

Senate challenger Shiva Ayyadurai faced fines of \$300 per day



In this July 24, 2017, file photo, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., speaks in a park in Berryville, Va., where Congressional Democrats unveiled their new agenda. Warren is working to defuse an issue that has dogged her for years, her claims ... more >

By Valerie Richardson - *The Washington Times* - Thursday, May 17, 2018

That campaign sign dubbing Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren a “fake Indian” no longer faces an existential threat from the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Cambridge officials have withdrawn their April order calling for Independent Senate candidate Shiva Ayyadurai to remove banners on his campaign bus depicting Ms. Warren in a feathered headdress with the slogan, “Only a REAL INDIAN can defeat the fake Indian.”

As a result, Mr. Ayyadurai filed a motion Thursday to drop his lawsuit accusing Cambridge of violating his free-speech rights, declaring it a “historic victory to protect your right to free speech.”

“If we had not fought and won this battle, the City of Cambridge would have set a historic precedent empowering any bureaucrat sitting in a City Hall across America to squelch your free speech, because they simply didn’t like you or favored a particular political ideology or candidate,” said Mr. Ayyadurai in a statement.

The April 5 order from a city building inspector instructed Mr. Ayyadurai to remove two large, identical signs posted on either side of his campaign bus or face fines of \$300 a day, adding that the city had received “a series of anonymous complaints” about the signage.

Ms. Warren lives about a mile away from the office building owned by Mr. Ayyadurai where the bus is parked when not being driven around the state for campaign appearances.

“Imagine being in constant fear that a slogan you put on your car, or on your body, such as a T-shirt, could result in your being dragged into court and fined?” he said. “This is a victory for all Americans.”

A letter from Ranjit Singanayagam, commissioner of the Cambridge Inspectional Services Department, said the order had been rescinded “based upon representations regarding the use of the bus for events and driving it to different locations.”

Mr. Ayyadurai, who was born in Mumbai, has hammered the senator on her assertions of Cherokee ancestry, an issue that also dogged her 2012 Senate campaign.

Ms. Warren claimed minority status during her teaching stints at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania law schools even though she is not an enrolled member of any tribe, prompting accusations that she did so to advance her career, which she has denied.

President Trump has kept the issue in the news by calling her “Pocahontas,” a nickname he gave her during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Ms. Warren, who said she grew up in Oklahoma with family stories of her Cherokee heritage, responded by telling the National Congress of American Indians in a Feb. 15 speech that she will “lift up” their stories whenever the president mocks her.

