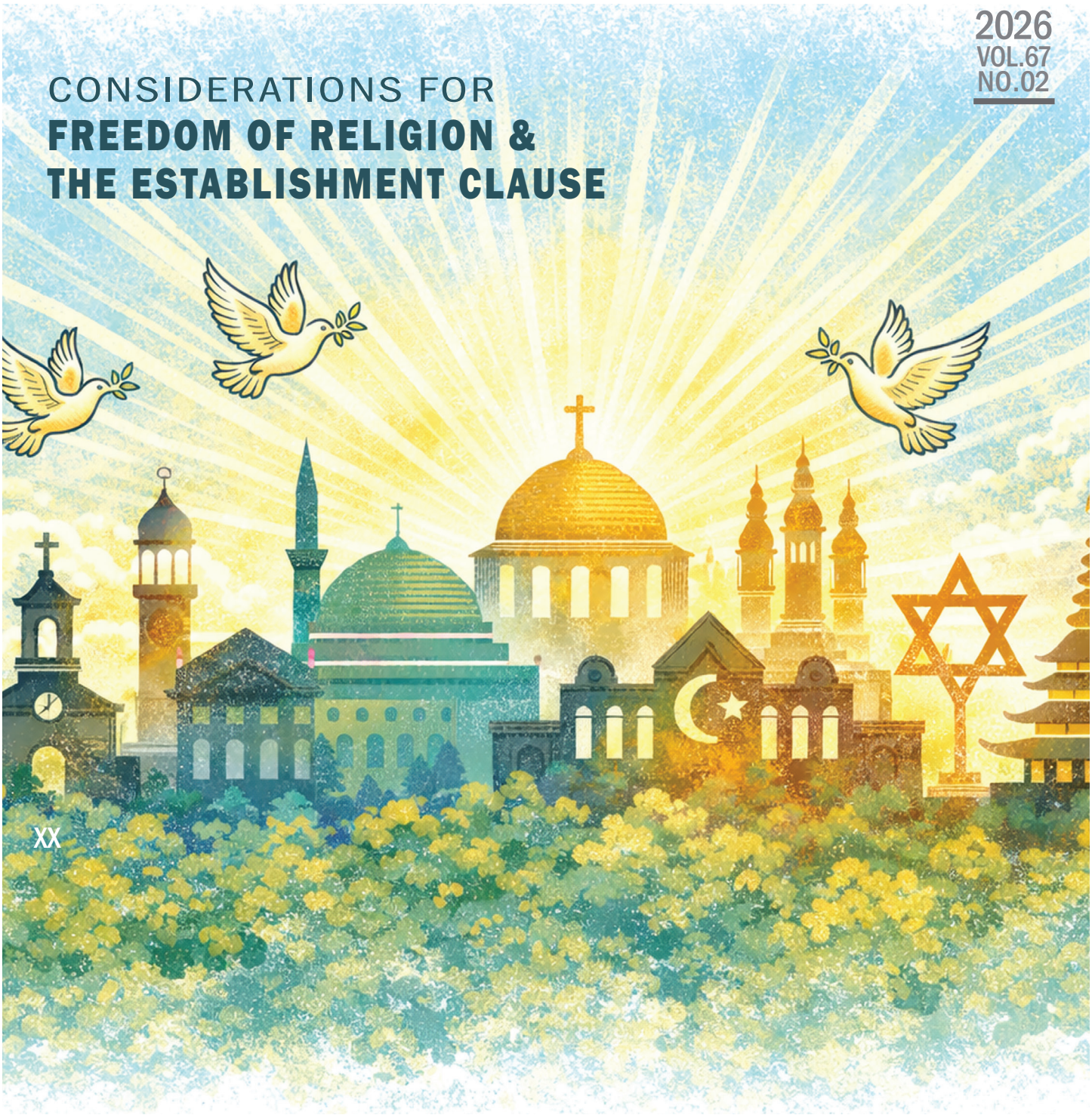
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CONSIDERATIONS FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION & THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE



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2026 Mid-Year Seminar
April 10-13, 2026 | Washington, D.C.

IMLA has secured a block of rooms and a special room rate at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, a first class facility, in Washington, D.C.

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Contents | MARCH-APRIL 2026

IN EVERY ISSUE

Page 8 | **CASE STUDY:** BIRMINGHAM'S DRUG NUISANCE ABATEMENT TEAM
Contributed by Avery Morris

Page 10 | **MENTOR'S CORNER:** ADVICE TO MY YOUNGER SELF
Contributed by Nathan M. Nickolaus, Chris Balch, Mandana D. Vidwan, Marion C. Moore, Jeannine Williams, Shaun Jacobs, and Leann Guzman

Page 12 | **MOVIE REVIEW:** IS THAT LEGAL? *Marty Supreme*
Contributed by Darren Shulman

Page 16 | **INSIDE CANADA:** RECENT CASE SUMMARIES
Contributed by MCM Consulting and Legal Services, Edmonton, Alberta



PUNG V. ISABELLA COUNTY
PROPERTY TAXES IN THE CROSSHAIRS
Contributed by Erich Eiselt



CONSIDERATIONS FOR
FREEDOM OF RELIGION & THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE
Contributed by Susan Keller

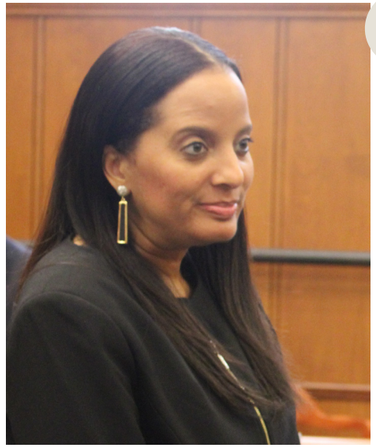
CASE STUDY

Birmingham's Drug Nuisance Abatement Team

An interview with City Attorney Nicole King

Contributed by Avery Morris





Top: King at Nuisance Property that was court ordered to be demolished
Bottom: King at MCBA seminar
Opposite Page: Part of the DNAT team on a site visit; L-R Emily Davis, Pierre Mede, Officer Shelby, Joseph Abrams.

1. How does your approach address addiction and drug nuisances?

Our work begins with accountability and ends with care. Through the Drug Nuisance Abatement Team, (DNAT) we focus on properties where drug activity has taken root, disrupting neighborhood safety. We use legal tools to require property owners to take responsibility and make real changes. When they do, crime decreases, and residents regain a sense of peace in their own communities.

At the same time, we understand that addiction is not only a legal issue. It is a human one. DNAT works alongside the Mayor's Office, non-profit partners, and public safety agencies to connect individuals to treatment and recovery resources. We also help fund NARCAN for first responders because saving lives must always be part of the solution. Every Birmingham resident deserves safety and compassion.

"We serve as a bridge between community concerns, public safety, and the legal process needed to address problem properties."

2. How long have you been involved in this effort?

With the support of Mayor Randall L. Woodfin and a task force rooted in community partnerships, I established the Drug Nuisance Abatement Team in 2020. What began as a focused initiative has continued to grow alongside our city's needs.



3. How has your approach changed with experience?

Initially, our work centered on drug-related and environmental nuisance cases. As we gained experience, we saw that many of the most dangerous situations facing neighborhoods extended beyond those categories. Our scope expanded to include public nuisance cases that pose serious threats to safety and quality of life, even when drugs are not involved.

That shift came from listening closely to residents and responding to what they were truly facing. It allowed us to intervene earlier and more effectively.

4. Was there a particular event, person, or other local government that inspired you to get involved in this way?

Mayor Randall L. Woodfin played a significant role in inspiring me to create DNAT. Early in my tenure as City Attorney, I spent time walking neighborhoods with him and listening to residents share their concerns about safety and their vision of what they wanted to see improved in their communities. Those conversations stayed with me.

After fourteen years of public service and experience as a prosecutor, I wanted to bring my legal background and passion for community service together to produce real, visible change. Through timing, faith, and collaboration, DNAT took shape.

5. Has your approach to the issue changed the way you view your/your office's role in the community?

It has reinforced that government works best when it works with the people it serves. Our office hears directly from residents asking for help, and we take that responsibility seriously.

We serve as a bridge between community concerns, public safety, and the legal process needed to address problem properties. While we cannot solve every issue, we can show up, listen, and act. Our goal is for residents to know they are not alone. We have a phone number and an email address for residents to report issues so that we may investigate their concerns. (problemproperty@birminghamal.gov)

6. Did you face any difficulties when building the program?

Yes. DNAT launched just as the COVID-19 pandemic began. Building a new initiative during a time of uncertainty required flexibility, persistence, and strong collaboration.

Those early challenges strengthened our partnerships and reinforced the importance of adaptability in public service.

7. What advice would you give to another local government attempting to build a similar program?

Strong leadership support is essential, as is collaboration across departments. DNAT relies on close partnerships with the Birmingham Police Department, the city's Planning, Engineering, and Permitting Department, Code Enforcement, and community stakeholders.

Equally important is trust. Building trust with residents takes time and consistency. When communities see that their concerns are heard and addressed, lasting change becomes possible.

8. Is there one success story from your program that stands out to you?

The transformation of the Norwood Plaza Apartments stands out most. For years, the complex was known for violence, drug activity, and neglect. It had become a symbol of harm and hopelessness for both residents and the surrounding neighborhood.

Through DNAT's legal action, residents were safely relocated and the owner ultimately demolished the property at their own expense. What once felt impossible became a turning point. That outcome restored hope and reminded the community that change is achievable.