

SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

Thibault Enterprises, LLC v. Yost

Thibault Enterprises, LLC v. Yost · No. 250128 · Decided April 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Virginia held that an easement holder is not automatically entitled to removal of every object located within an easement of defined width. Courts must examine the easement's language and determine whether the servient estate owner's use unreasonably interferes with the easement's purpose. The court reversed the Court of Appeals and entered final judgment for Thibault Enterprises, LLC.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Virginia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Justice Stephen R. McCullough; All the Justices
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of Virginia
DECIDED	April 9, 2026
DOCKET	250128
DISPOSITION	reversed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Thibault appealed the circuit court's injunction prohibiting it from placing any objects within a 50-foot easement. The Court of Appeals of Virginia affirmed in an unpublished opinion. The Supreme Court of Virginia granted an appeal and reversed.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A decision to grant or deny an injunction is reviewed for abuse of discretion and will not be disturbed unless plainly wrong. An injunction decision is plainly wrong when unsupported by the evidence or based on an erroneous application of law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published and precedential
PARTIES	Thibault Enterprises, LLC v. David A. Yost, Co-Trustee Under the Yost Living Trust, et al.

TOPICS

- easements
- real estate
- equitable relief
- statutory interpretation
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

real estate

easements

equitable relief

statutory interpretation

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Virginia law automatically requires the owner of a servient estate to remove every object located within an easement of a defined width.
2. Whether Code § 55.1-305 requires removal of all objects within a specified-width right-of-way easement, even when the objects do not unreasonably interfere with the easement holder's use.
3. Whether the injunction barring Thibault from placing any objects within the 50-foot easement was plainly wrong.

HOLDINGS

1. The owner of a servient estate is not automatically required to remove all objects intruding into an easement of defined width. Courts must examine the deed's language and the parties' intent to determine the easement's purpose, then evaluate whether the servient owner's conduct unreasonably interferes with the easement.
2. Code § 55.1-305 prohibits activities or objects that unreasonably interfere with the dominant owner's enjoyment of the easement; it does not require removal of every object within an easement of specified width. Because the objects did not unreasonably interfere with the Yosts' ingress and egress, the statute did not authorize the injunction.
3. The injunction was plainly wrong because the evidence did not establish an impermissible interference with the Yosts' easement and the lower courts applied an incorrect legal rule by treating any object within the 50-foot boundary as impermissible.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Consistent with our cases and Code § 55.1-305, we hold that the owner of a servient estate is not automatically required to remove all objects intruding into an easement of a defined width.” (8)

“Instead, courts reviewing claims of an impermissible encroachment upon an easement, whether of defined width or otherwise, should (1) examine the language of the deed to determine the purpose of the easement and the intent of the parties; and (2) evaluate whether the actions of the owner of the servient estate unreasonably interfere with the easement.” (8)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Yost Living Trust owns 1.08 acres in Dinwiddie County, where David and Caryn Yost live. Their deed grants an easement for ingress and egress over an outlet road 50 feet wide, although the gravel road used to reach their home is approximately 12 feet wide. Thibault owns the servient estate and placed fences, grapevines, fence poles, hay bales, trees, and other objects within the 50-foot easement alongside, but not in, the gravel road. The parties stipulated and the courts found that these objects did not interfere with the Yosts' ability to travel to and from their home.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Yosts sued Thibault, alleging that fences, vines, hay bales, and other objects within the boundaries of their ingress-and-egress easement constituted a nuisance. The circuit court granted an injunction barring Thibault from placing any objects in the 50-foot easement. The Court of Appeals affirmed, reasoning that the objects narrowed the easement's defined width. The Supreme Court of Virginia reversed and entered final judgment for Thibault.

DISPOSITION

reversed

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand; the court reversed the Court of Appeals and entered final judgment for Thibault.

CASES CITED

- Snead v. C&S Props. Holding Co., 279 Va. 607 (2010)
- Piney Meeting House v. Hart, 284 Va. 187 (2012)
- Anderson v. Delore, 278 Va. 251 (2009)
- Willing v. Booker, 160 Va. 461 (1933)
- Walton v. Capital Land, Inc., 252 Va. 324 (1996)
- Pizzarelle v. Dempsey, 259 Va. 521 (2000)
- Tvardek v. Powhatan Village Homeowners Ass'n, 291 Va. 269 (2016)
- Shenandoah Acres, Inc. v. D.M. Conner, Inc., 256 Va. 337 (1998)
- Thibault Enters. L.L.C. v. Yost, No. 1845-23-2 (Va. Ct. App. 2025)