

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P. O. BOX 750 · MADISON, WI 53701 · (608) 256-8900 · WWW.FFRF.ORG

November 22, 2011

Heidi Taylor  
Recreation Center Supervisor  
City of Euless Parks and Community Services  
300 W. Midway  
Euless, TX 76039

Re: Cross Display

Dear Ms. Taylor:

I am writing on behalf of a concerned Euless resident and taxpayer, as well as other members of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), to alert you to a constitutional concern in the Senior Center of the Euless Family Life Center. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 17,000 members across the country, including over 800 in Texas. Our purpose is to protect the constitutional principle of separation between church and state.

It is our information and understanding that the Senior Center at the Euless Family Life Center has recently been redecorated with various patriotic symbols, including military posters, the state flag, and flags representing the various armed services. Among these items, a religious display was also erected. It is our understanding that the display includes a Latin cross under a sign that reads, "When you can't see God's hand, trust his heart."

It is our understanding that the Euless Family Life Center is a public facility. The Establishment Clause in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits government sponsorship of religious messages. The Supreme Court has said time and again that the "First Amendment mandates government neutrality between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion." *McCreary County, Ky. v. American Civil Liberties Union of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844, 860 (2005); *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 53 (1985); *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97, 104 (1968); *Everson v. Board of Ed. of Ewing*, 330 U.S. 1, 15-16 (1947).

It is inappropriate for religious icons to be displayed in a public building. A reasonable observer would view the display of Christian symbols and a similarly religious quote as endorsement of religion – specifically, Christianity – by the Euless Family Life Center, and as such, by the city of Euless.

The City must ensure that religious messages are not posted on public property. The religious display in the Senior Center is constitutionally problematic and particularly offensive to veterans and other seniors who do not believe in the Christian god promoted by the displays.

Please inform us in writing of the actions you are taking to remedy this concern. We look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Stephanie A. Schmitt  
Staff Attorney