

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

July 21, 2011

SENT VIA FAX AND U.S. MAIL
(601) 351-7510

Postmaster
US Postal Service
16 N. McHenry Ave
McHenry MS 39561-9998

COPY

Re: Religious Flyer Displayed in Post Office

Dear Postmaster:

I am writing on behalf of a concerned McHenry resident and taxpayer, and other Mississippi members of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), to alert you to a violation of postal regulations and the U.S. Constitution. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization representing over 16,600 members across the country, including many members in Mississippi. Our purpose is to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church and represent the views of nonbelieving Americans.

It is our information and understanding that a flyer advertising Vacation Bible School at McHenry First Baptist Church is displayed at the McHenry, Mississippi post office. The flyer appears to be on a very large sheet of paper adorned with the Statue of Liberty and other New York City landmarks. This flyer is in clear view of all passersby. This Vacation Bible School takes place from July 18 through July 22, 2011. Please find enclosed pictures showing the displayed flier on the customer counter.

This display violates post office regulations and the U.S. Constitution and must be removed immediately.

United States postal regulations prohibit the display of flyers on postal property. POM § 124.55 states that no flyers may be deposited on counters or other interior public areas on postal premises. This section goes on to state that private businesses and nonprofit organizations may not post or display advertisement in Post Offices lobbies or other posting space. POM §124.55(a)

Furthermore, displaying this flyer containing a religious message violates the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. "The defining principle of Establishment

Clause jurisprudence is that 'First Amendment mandates government neutrality between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion.' " McCreary County v. ACLU, 545 U.S. 844, 860 (2005) (quoting Epperson v. Arkansas, 393 U.S. 97, 104 (1968)). By displaying this flyer on its counters, the Lothian Maryland post office branch is illegally demonstrating a preference for religion, specifically Christianity.

We ask that you immediately remove this flyer from postal property. We further request that you inform us in writing of the steps you are taking to remedy this situation.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Schmitt For

Rebecca S. Markert
Staff Attorney

Enclosures

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Mon
7:30 - NOON
7:00
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BOX MAIL
CLOSED

FOR NOW
FOR NOW

FOR NOW
FOR NOW

I ♥ TBS
McHenry 1st Baptist Church
July 18 - 22
8:30 AM - 12 Noon

FOR NOW
FOR NOW

7.9.2011

Kemper
Wayne Dalton

I ♥ TVBS

McHenry 1st
Baptist Church

Defer
July 18-22

Times
8:30 A.M. — 12 NOON

7.9.2011