

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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May 6, 2020

SENT VIA EMAIL ONLY: attys@bhrlegal.com

James D. Kreyenbuhl, Esq.
Brennan, Harris & Rominger LLP
600 Chatham Center Drive, Suite 310
Savannah, GA 31402

Re: Gideon Bible Distribution

Dear Mr. Kreyenbuhl:

Thank you for your response on behalf of the Effingham County School District. We appreciate that the superintendent and board members understand the importance of the First Amendment, including both the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause, but there is no free exercise issue involved in this situation. The Gideons have no free exercise right to be allowed into public school classrooms in order to proselytize and distribute religious materials. The right of free exercise does not require a school district to grant individuals access to a captive audience of public school students to attempt to convert the students to their particular religion. In fact, this conduct infringes on the religious freedom of students and is prohibited by the Establishment Clause. There is no need for the District to “strike the appropriate balance” between these two constitutional provisions. A public school district cannot allow Gideons into classrooms to proselytize and to distribute religious materials to students.

Though the District intends to put in place “appropriate policies and practices regarding these matters that are in compliance with the constitutional standards as interpreted by courts of [your] jurisdiction,” the District egregiously violated its students’ constitutional rights, including our three complainants.

We request a written assurance that outside adults will not be allowed into public school classrooms to proselytize or distribute religious materials again in the future so that we may inform our complainants that this matter has been resolved.

Sincerely,



Christopher Line
Staff Attorney
Freedom From Religion Foundation