

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

January 19, 2024

SENT VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL: Greg.Steube@mail.house.gov

Honorable Greg Steube
2457 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Divisive Christian flag

Dear Representative Steube,

On behalf of members of our organization who are your constituents, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is writing to ask you to immediately remove the Christian flag from the flagpole outside of your congressional office. FFRF is a national nonprofit educational association, which works to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church and to educate the public about nontheism. FFRF represents more than 40,000 nonreligious members nationwide, which includes more than 2,000 Florida members, including many who are your constituents.

As a member of Congress who took an oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic,” you have sworn to uphold a godless and entirely secular Constitution.

The inherent religious significance of the Christian flag, which bears the Latin cross, is undeniable. The Christian flag was designed in the 1890s to trade on the symbolic power of flags and that of the cross, with the aim to unite all the world’s Christians under a single banner.¹ The flag’s colors and emblem—the Latin cross—were chosen deliberately to represent core Christian principles and concepts. Its white field represents peace and purity. Its blue canton signifies fidelity. And most crucially, its Latin cross, colored red to denote the blood of Jesus, symbolizes Christianity itself. By placing this flag outside your office you are clearly signaling that Christians of a certain ilk are favored “insiders,” and that non-Christians and nonbelievers are “outsiders.”

But you do not just represent Christians, sir, you represent members in your district of all religious stripes, and none at all. They are all due constituency services from your office, and to be made to feel like equally welcomed and valued constituents and citizens. There is no secular

¹ The Children’s Own: The Christian Flag, 84 CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE 1802, 1802 (Nov. 11, 1909), <https://bit.ly/2Tn6y0b>.

or legitimate political purpose to flying the flag in front of your congressional office. This flag sends a totally inappropriate message, and for this reason alone it should be removed.

Secondly, your oath promised to defend the Constitution from “all enemies, foreign *and domestic.*” *[emphasis added]* Instead you are lending your support to a symbol co-opted by a treasonous movement connected to the unthinkable events of Jan. 6, 2021. While the flag originally represented only Christianity, it has been transformed into a nod to Christian nationalism. The Christian flag was proudly carried by many rioters and insurrectionists during the January 6 putsch. One rioter carried the Christian flag onto the floor of the House of Representatives even as guns were drawn to keep them out.² FFRF, along with the Baptists Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, published a report³ detailing the links between Christian nationalism and the Jan. 6 insurrection. The report documents how members of the mob carried the Christian flag as they marched to storm the Capitol.

Thus placing this flag in front of your office sends an unfortunate message to your peers in Congress who, like you, were under siege on Jan. 6, that you seemingly support those who sought to effect a coup to subvert the will of the people as well as the peaceful transfer of power. It sends an especially egregious and ungrateful message to the courageous Capitol police, five of whom ultimately died and dozens of whom were injured, while defending you and other members of Congress.

Perhaps you were ignorant of these facts when you placed this flag in front of your office. Perhaps you were even ignorant that it is being adopted by white Christian nationalists and was hoisted during the insurrection. But now you know. This symbol of white Christian nationalism and treason should not tarnish congressional property. It is evident that this flag cloaked the insurrectionists in a religious justification. Flying it outside your congressional office lends unconscionable legitimacy to their actions. It also sends a troubling message of endorsement for the intolerant and bigoted Christian nationalism movement as a whole.

We ask that you remove the flag immediately to show your commitment to the Constitution and your respect for *all* your constituents. Please may we hear from you at your earliest convenience?

Very truly,



Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker
Co-Presidents

² <https://twitter.com/diegopues/status/1346998530259394563>

³ Christian nationalism and the January 6 insurrection:

https://ffrf.org/uploads/legal/Christian_Nationalism_and_the_Jan6_Insurrection-2-9-22.pdf