

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

December 14, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL:

eoclass@irs.gov

Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Re: Destiny Christian Church Electioneering

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to report concerns of potential illegal political campaigning by Destiny Christian Church, located at 6900 Destiny Dr, Rocklin, CA 95677. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 39,000 members across the country. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism. We have previously reported Destiny Christian Church for similar behavior on September 1, 2022.

According to a November 2022 report published by ProPublica and the Texas Tribune, Destiny Christian Church Lead Pastor Greg Fairrington explicitly endorsed Anthony Trimino as a candidate for California governor during a conversation with the candidate as part of a service on May 15, 2022. Fairrington prayed, referring to Trimino, “Lord God, that you would inspire voters here in the state of California to cast their vote for the sanctity of life. Lord God, that they would get behind a conservative Christian candidate.”¹

The Internal Revenue Code states that to retain their 501(c)(3) status an organization cannot “participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.”² Here, Pastor Fairrington in his role as the lead pastor of 501(c)(3) organization Destiny Christian Church breached the responsibilities that come with his church’s tax exempt status. Pastor Fairrington endorsing a candidate for governor and directing his congregation to vote for him is a violation of these regulations.

Destiny Christian Church appears to have improperly used its status as a religious organization and 501(c)(3) entity to intervene in political campaigning. Pastor Fairrington once again violated

¹ Jessica Priest & Jeremy Schwartz, *These 20 Churches Supported Political Candidates. Experts Say they Violated Federal Law.*, ProPublica and the Texas Tribune (November 7, 2022), available at: <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/11/07/churches-list-violations-johnson-amendment/>.

² I.R.C. Sec. 501(c)(3)

IRS regulations by endorsing Anthony Trimino, displaying a clear preference for one candidate over others.

We write to respectfully request that the IRS immediately investigate Destiny Christian Church, and ensure that it is no longer receiving the benefits of 501(c)(3) status and that donations made to the church are no longer being treated as tax deductible. The IRS should take appropriate action to remedy any violations of 501(c)(3) regulations that occurred or which continue to occur.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kat D. Grant", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kat D. Grant

Equal Justice Works Fellow (sponsored by the Wm. Collins Kohler Foundation)
Freedom From Religion Foundation