

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

July 24, 2020

Mary A. Epps
Exempt Organizations Examinations
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Re: Illegal Politicking at Church

Dear Ms. Epps:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to report potential illegal political campaigning that occurred at the First Baptist Church Dallas, located at 1707 San Jacinto, Dallas, TX 75201. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 32,000 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.

It is our understanding that Pastor Robert Jeffress endorsed candidates Donald Trump and Mike Pence during Pence's visit to the church on June 28, 2020.¹ Jeffress said "President Trump, we love you," and, admitting that "I probably shouldn't say this," continued by indicating "we are hoping and we are praying" that Pence would be re-elected vice president and then run for president.²

IRS regulations specify that 501(c)(3) organizations, which include churches and other religious organizations, are prohibited from "[participating in or intervening in]... any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office." Rev. Rul. 2007-41, 2007-25 I.R.B. (June 28, 2007).

Pastor Jeffress inappropriately used his position as pastor of First Baptist Church to intervene an election, making it very clear to his congregants who he was endorsing in the 2020 presidential election.

FFRF respectfully requests that the IRS commence an immediate investigation of First Baptist Church Dallas. The IRS should take appropriate action to remedy this violation of 501(c)(3) regulations.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Madeline Ziegler
Staff Attorney

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/28/politics/mike-pence-dallas-choir-no-masks-church-event/index.html>

² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYQIAunB_xI