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February 2, 2023

REF. OUR FILE

CHI-98

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Freedom From Religion Foundation
P.O. Box 750
Madison, Wisconsin 53701
chris@ffrf.org

Attention: Mr. Christopher Line
Staff Attorney

Re: **Response to Your January 25, 2023 Letter Regarding A Holiday Card Sent By
Chino Valley Unified School District Board Member**

Dear Mr. Line:

Our office is counsel to the Chino Valley Unified School District (the "District") in the above referenced matter.

On January 25, 2023, you wrote to our office regarding your concern about a holiday card sent to District employees from Chino Valley Unified School District Board member Mr. James Na.

Mr. Na's holiday card stated:

*"May peace be before you at every meal
And faith ring through every song
For Christ is alive the light of the world
May he bless you all season long"*

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You objected to the use of religious language in Mr. Na's card.

Chino Valley Unified School District Board Bylaw 9010.5 "Public Statements Regarding Religion or Non-Religion" states:

"As the elected legislative body of the Chino Valley Unified School District; the Board of Education recognizes that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees each person's individual right to free exercise of religion or non-religion, and prevents the government and other public officials from establishing a religion or non-religion.

...

When acting in their official capacities and when speaking on behalf of the District, Board members shall not proselytize, and shall be neutral towards religion and/or non-religion."

Upon the District's investigation of the delivery of the holiday card it was determined that the holiday card as prepared should not have been delivered.

The District's publication department offers a service to prepare and review literature to ensure it is appropriate for distribution based on District policy.

Mr. Na paid for the District's service to prepare and review the card. The District's investigation found that the individual responsible for reviewing the holiday card should have identified the phrases "*Christmas Blessing*" and "*For Christ alive*" and any reference to Christmas in the salutation as inconsistent with District Board Bylaw 9010.5.

Be assured that the District has taken steps to mitigate the possibility of such action reoccurring.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the attention of the District.

Respectfully,



Margaret A. Chidester

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CC:

Norm Enfield, Ed.D
Superintendent
Chino Valley Unified School District