

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

April 18, 2011

Lost Cajun Kitchen  
Dave & Sharon Prudhomme, Owners  
50 Lancaster Avenue  
Columbia, PA 17512

Re: Discriminatory Discount

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Prudhomme:

I am writing on behalf of a concerned Lost Cajun Kitchen customer and members of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to inform you of a serious civil rights concern with a Lost Cajun Kitchen promotion. FFRF is a nationwide nonprofit organization with over 16,000 supporters, including over 500 in Pennsylvania. Our purpose is to educate on nontheism and protect the constitutional principle of separation of church and state.

It is our information and understanding that Lost Cajun Kitchen offers and promotes a discount to customers who bring in a church bulletin on Sunday. We understand the store advertises this discount via their website. Enclosed is a copy of this advertisement listed on the Menus & Specials page.

Offering this discount violates the federal Civil Rights Act in addition to provisions of state civil rights statutes.

First, the Civil Rights Act states in relevant part, "All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation... without discrimination on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin." 42 U.S.C. §2000a(a). As a place of "public accommodation," it is illegal for Lost Cajun Kitchen to discriminate, or show favoritism, on the basis of religion. *See* 42 U.S.C. §2000a(b)(defining a place of public accommodation as "any restaurant, cafeteria, lunchroom, lunch counter, soda fountain, or other facility principally engaged in selling food for consumption on the premises..."). Lost Cajun Kitchen's restrictive promotional practice favors religious customers and denies customers who do not attend church, and nonbelievers the right to "full and equal" enjoyment of Lost Cajun Kitchen. Any promotions should be available to all customers regardless of religious preference or practice on a non-discriminatory basis.

Second, offering a special discount to individuals attending Christian worship service or other religious services violates the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. That law says, "It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice...for any person being the owner...of any public accommodation...to refuse, withhold from, or deny any person because of his...religious creed... either directly or indirectly, any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges of such public accommodation." 43 P.S. §955(i)(1). The practice of providing a discount to religious service attendees is a violation of this state law.

We kindly urge you to see that these discriminatory discounts are put to a stop. Please notify us in writing about the steps you are taking to end this violation of federal and state laws so that we may inform our complainant. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca S. Markert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca S. Markert  
Staff Attorney

Enclosure