

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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March 18, 2014

Mailed and emailed govgeneral@wisconsin.gov

Office of Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison WI 53702

Re: Misuse of Official Facebook, Twitter accounts to promote religion

Dear Governor Walker:

On behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and our 20,000 members nationwide, including more than 1,300 Wisconsin members, we're writing to express our dismay at your misuse of gubernatorial and State of Wisconsin imprimatur to expressly promote your personal religious beliefs.

It is improper for a state employee, much less for the chief executive officer of the state, to use the machinery of the State of Wisconsin to promote personal religious views. It is unethical to use state phones, mail, e-mail, etc., for personal religious use or promotion, just as it is for campaigning.

On March 16, 2014, you posted on your official Twitter and Facebook accounts the words "Philippians 4:13," a verse which reads, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." (See attached screen shots) This braggadocio verse coming from a public official is rather disturbing. To say "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me," seems more like a threat, or the utterance of a theocratic dictator, than of a duly elected civil servant.

More important, government and government officials "cannot endorse the religious practices and beliefs of some citizens without sending a clear message to nonadherents that they are outsiders or less than full members of the political community. *County of Allegheny v. ACLU*, 492 U.S. 573, 627 (1989) (O'Connor, J., concurring). "[S]ponsorship of a religious message is impermissible because it sends the ancillary message to members of the audience who are nonadherents that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community." *Santa Fe Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 530 U.S. at 309-10 (quoting *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. at 668) (O'Connor, J., concurring).

As governor, you took an oath of office to uphold the entirely godless and secular U.S. Constitution. You have misused your secular authority and podium to promote not just religion over non-religion, but one religion over another in a manner that makes many Wisconsin citizens uncomfortable. On behalf of our membership, we ask you to immediately delete this religious message from your official gubernatorial Facebook and Twitter. May we hear from you at your earliest convenience?

Very truly

Annie Laurie Gaylor &
Annie Laurie Gaylor and Dan Barker

