

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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

July 17, 2024

SENT VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL: todd.w.lenke@usps.gov

Todd W. Lenke
Postmaster
3900 Gabrielle Lane
Aurora, IL 60598-8801

Re: Religious display at post office

Dear Postmaster Lenke:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) regarding a violation of postal regulations and the U.S. Constitution. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 40,000 members across the country, including members and a chapter in Illinois. Our purposes are to protect the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.

A concerned community member and taxpayer informs us of a religious display at East Aurora Post Office. The display is a Latin cross in public view, behind the customer counter. Please see the enclosed image.

We ask that you investigate and ensure that the symbol is removed immediately. Displaying religious iconography in a post office violates federal regulations and the federal Constitution.

United States postal regulations prohibit the display of religious materials, other than stamp art, on postal property. USPS POM § 124.57(c) states in part: “Symbols identified with a particular religion, including but not limited to nativity scenes, crosses, or the Star of David, shall not be displayed on postal property.” POM § 124.55(e) provides that postings in public access areas “may not be used for posting or display of . . . religious symbols or matter.”

Furthermore, this display violates the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. “The defining principle of Establishment Clause jurisprudence is that ‘First Amendment mandates government neutrality between religion and religion, and between religion and nonreligion.’” *McCreary Cnty., Ky. v. Am. Civil Liberties Union of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844 (2005) (quoting *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97, 104 (1968)). By displaying religious

iconography on its grounds, the East Aurora Post Office is demonstrating a preference for religion over nonreligion.

We ask that you ensure this religious display is removed from the East Aurora Post Office and that your location is in compliance with postal regulations and the Constitution. Please inform us in writing of the steps you are taking to remedy this situation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hirsh M. Joshi".

Hirsh M. Joshi
Patrick O'Reiley Legal Fellow
Freedom From Religion Foundation

Enclosure

