

From: Lea Carawan <Lea@CPCFoundation.com>
To: Kevin L. BryantKevinBryant@scstatehouse.gov
Date: 12/13/2018 10:38:30 AM
Subject: Christmas in the Public Square – The Truth

Dear Kevin,

Anti-faith groups are committed to censoring Christmas, rather than spreading the true spirit of the season, and they are getting more aggressive the closer we get to celebrating the holidays.

They are counting on people of faith caving in to the pressure to keep their Christmas joy private... but you do not have to concede to these deceptive tactics!

As a matter of fact, any claim that the Constitution requires a "separation of church and state" is patently untrue. The government should stay out of church affairs and should not coerce people to adhere to any particular faith tradition, but our nation has always had a strong tradition of government accommodation of religion. We need to spread the word far and wide about the false narrative that religious references in the public square are unconstitutional.

For instance, Nativity scenes ARE permitted on government property. In *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668 (1984), the U.S. Supreme Court considered whether a city-owned Nativity scene displayed at Christmas violated the First Amendment. Chief Justice Burger explained that a complete separation of church and state is impossible. A city-owned Nativity scene IS constitutional as long as there are other holiday symbols represented.

For the Court, the Chief Justice wrote:

"... Nor does the Constitution require complete separation of church and state; it affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any. See, e.g., *Zorach v. Clauson*; *McCormick v. Board of Education*..." [Read more](#)

Some school administrators, parents, and students are unclear about which Christmas traditions are acceptable in public schools. In several instances, schools have banned any Christmas carols that have religious undertones. The good news is that students CAN express their faith during the holidays. Several courts have held that students singing Christmas carols—even if they have spiritual content—as long as these activities further students' education, honor our religious heritage and include other references to holiday traditions.

Additionally, students MAY be taught about the biblical origins of Christmas in public schools. According to the Supreme Court in *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39, 42 (1980), the "Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like."

Will you join me in spreading the truth about our freedom of expression this Christmas season? Please do not give

to those who wish to stifle your holiday cheer. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation today - we have legal experts on staff who may be able to help.

Keeping Faith in America,

Lea Carawan
Executive Director
Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation

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