

Church Told Flyers Are Too Religious, Barred from Sharing Community Events Information with Students

Attorneys say school district is unlawfully discriminating against religious speech

YERINGTON, Nev.—Today, attorneys with First Liberty Institute and Lipson, Neilson, Cole, Seltzer & Garin, P.C. (“Lipson Neilson”) sent a [letter](#) to the Lyon County School District in Yerington, Nevada demanding the school district allow its client, Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley, to participate equally in the school’s community flyer distribution program and change its policy to comply with the law. The Lyon County School District allows community organizations from a variety of perspectives to distribute flyers to parents and students about extracurricular events and activities. Yet the school district’s new policy has required Calvary Chapel, a local church, to remove all references to its religious perspective or cease distributing flyers altogether.

“We hope the school district will let our client participate in the community information program just like everyone else by ending its discriminatory new policy,” said Stephanie Taub, Counsel for First Liberty. “The First Amendment requires school districts to be neutral toward religion. They may not single out a church’s flyers for censorship, and they may not force a church to scrub the flyers of any religious language. That is hostility toward religion.”

The Lyon County School District has distributed flyers about outdoor programs, sports leagues, and Halloween parties from a variety of local, community organizations. However, according to the letter sent Wednesday, it refused to distribute flyers about Calvary Chapel’s Outdoor Excursions program, Harvest Festival, and Youth Nights (which include basketball and air hockey) simply because they include phrases such as “worship music” and “devotional.”

“Not only is this practice unconstitutional, it defeats the very purpose of providing community information,” said Amber Williams, Associate Attorney with Lipson Neilson. “By removing all religious references from the flyers, parents and students have no way of knowing about the nature of the events and cannot make informed decisions about whether to attend.”

To learn more, visit FirstLiberty.org/CalvaryChapel.

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](http://FirstLiberty.org) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNiel at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.