



(Left: Original Hunt family photo rejected by Zazzle; Right: Cropped version of photo suggested by Zazzle. Photos may be used with credit to, “First Liberty Institute” or “FirstLiberty.org”)

United States Postal Service Regulation Denies Personalized Christmas Stamp Because of Religious Content

Regulation that prevents “any depiction” of religious content forces USPS vendors to reject family vacation photo in front of historic cathedral

PLANO, TX—First Liberty Institute sent a letter today to the United States Postal Service (“USPS”) seeking clarification of its policies regarding custom postage. The letter follows the adoption in 2017 by the USPS of a regulation barring “any depiction” of religious content, which forced vendor Zazzle and Stamps.com to deny First Liberty client Tavia Hunt the purchase of a personalized, custom Christmas card stamp featuring her family’s vacation photo in front of a historic cathedral.

You can read the letter [here](#).

“No one should have to go to court to send a Christmas card,” said Hiram Sasser, General Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “USPS policies are so ambiguous and unequally applied that even its approved vendors don’t know what is allowed and what isn’t. The USPS has made Zazzle and Stamps.com agents of discrimination.”

In late November, Mrs. Hunt sought to purchase a personalized, custom stamp through Zazzle, which partners with Stamps.com to print custom postage, that included a photo of her family in front of St. Basil’s Cathedral taken this year while in Moscow for the World Cup. After initially accepting her order, Zazzle informed Mrs. Hunt that her order was being cancelled because of its “religious” nature, specifically the presence of St. Basil’s cathedral in the background. Zazzle then indicated that Mrs. Hunt’s order would be

approved if the photo were cropped to make the cathedral “less obvious.” Ultimately, Zazzle chose to indefinitely “pause” its production of custom postage for the entire nation rather than run afoul of the Postal Service’s comprehensive ban on religious images.

In response to the rejection of her stamp, Mrs. Hunt said, “All I wanted was to add something personal to my family’s Christmas cards. I was shocked that a family photo that includes a historic cathedral in the background is considered too religious by the Post Office.”

First Liberty explained that the USPS regulation is overly broad and as applied may violate the First Amendment’s free exercise clause. Both Stamps.com and Zazzle.com commented against the breadth of the religious restriction when it was published in the Federal Register, but the offending provision was not changed. Without clarification, legal action is possible.

“American taxpayers who fund the Postal Service deserve to know whether they can order a customized stamp or not,” added Sasser.

#

About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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