



## Texas County Defies Demands to Remove Crosses From Courthouse

The latest efforts of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to force its godless ideology on others has suffered a head-on collision with a Texas county determined to maintain its autonomy concerning religious expression. Recently the FFRF, which touts itself as the “nation’s largest association of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics),” sent a letter of warning to a judge in San Jacinto County, Texas, advising him that four crosses adorning the county courthouse in Coldspring, Texas were a violation of the First Amendment’s “Establishment” clause, which supposedly disallows any symbols of faith on government property.



In the letter to County Judge Fritz Faulkner, an FFRF attorney claimed that a local resident had complained about the crosses and wanted them removed. “The County’s permanent display of four large Latin crosses on the County Courthouse is unconstitutional,” blustered the FFRF lawyer. “The inherent religious significance of the Latin cross is undeniable and is not disguisable.... The display of this patently religious symbol on public property confers government endorsement of Christianity, a blatant violation of the Establishment Clause.” The letter went on to demand that “San Jacinto County must remove these crosses from the San Jacinto County Courthouse immediately.”

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While the FFRF is accustomed to intimidating school districts and government entities into submission to its demands, the residents of San Jacinto County offered a different response. In a nearly three-hour public meeting called by the county commissioners, individuals from Coldspring and the surrounding area weighed in on the FFRF’s demand, insisting that the county keep the crosses in place on the courthouse. “I am a Christian woman,” testified one woman to the commissioners, as reported by TheBlaze.com. “I’m here today as a servant of our Lord and Savior [Jesus Christ], asking that the crosses on our courthouse in Coldspring be left on this building.”

James Holcomb, a student at Calvary Christian Academy, a Christian school in Coldspring, testified that “the foundation of this town is built upon God, and just because you cannot respect that, doesn’t mean you can take it away from us.”

Another citizen recommended that those who don’t like seeing the Christian symbols on the government building should look the other way.

Following testimony by scores of local residents, County Judge Faulkner, chief executive officer of the county, said, “I think the people have spoken. We are elected by the people and it is our obligation to follow the people.” The county commissioners followed up with a unanimous vote to ignore the FFRF’s



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 21, 2019

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demands and keep the crosses in place.

In a letter of support to the county, Texas First Assistant Attorney General Jeff Mateer confirmed that the county was within its constitutionally guaranteed rights to “reject FFRF’s demand to impose its anti-religion bias against San Jacinto County.” He added that “we want to make it clear that your county may display historical religious symbols, like crosses, without violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.”

Mateer noted the FFRF’s penchant for filing lawsuits “to try to force government to purge all acknowledgment of religion,” advising that “if that occurs, we look forward to supporting your lawful decision to retain the crosses.”

[The website christiannews.net](#) noted that after the vote, local Republican Party Chair Dwayne Wright “posted a photo to social media to show that not only were the crosses not removed, but the lights on the crosses, which are usually only turned on in December, were lit up as a show of solidarity. The photo shows a cross on the front of the building glowing brightly in the dark of night.”

In a followup statement an FFRF attorney said that his group found it “extremely disappointing that the county has decided to continue violating the constitutional rights of its citizens.” He added that the “FFRF will be following up with our local complainant and evaluating our next steps.”

County Judge Faulkner responded by saying that the county would continue to exercise its rights and would access additional legal counsel if necessary.

Image: Screenshot of San Jacinto County GOP chair Dwayne Wright’s Facebook page



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