

CATHOLIC LEAGUE TO ATHEISTS—SUE US

[Bill Donohue](#)

We've had it with atheist bullies. That's why we are asking one of their most prominent groups to consider suing us. Here's how this developed.

An atheist hate group from Wisconsin, Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), registered a complaint about a nativity scene being displayed by the Toledo Fire Department in Toledo, Iowa, outside of Des Moines. The crèche has been a feature of the firehouse for about 20 years. City leaders initially gave in and removed the nativity scene.

Toledo Mayor Brian Sokol then decided to put the nativity scene back at the firehouse: secular symbols now surround the crèche. We commend him for doing so and we pledge to assist him if he is further badgered.

In their letter to Toledo officials, FFRF said the following: "Nativity scenes on public property are unnecessary, inappropriate and divisive. It is irrefutable that the nativity is a religious, Christian symbol. The best solution is to remove this nativity scene and discontinue hosting religious displays on public property."

FFRF is wrong. This is pure intimidation. Nativity scenes on public property are necessary and appropriate at Christmastime, and the only people who think they are divisive are Christian bashers who specialize in dividing Americans.

It is entirely legal to display a nativity scene on public property; some conditions may apply.

The Catholic League erected its life-size nativity scene in

Central Park on December 7; it will be up until after the new year. We get a permit from the City of New York's Parks Department every year, and have had our nativity scene on display there since the mid-1990s.

We don't have any secular symbols surrounding our display—no Jack Frost or reindeers. It is purely a religious expression. That is because Central Park is considered a public forum, open to all points of view.

If we were to display a nativity scene on or near City Hall, the seat of government, we would have to include secular symbols; otherwise it might give the impression that the government is endorsing Christianity.

Therefore, what Mayor Sokol has done is entirely constitutional. We contacted his office today pledging our support. We notified the mayor's office that if FFRF wants to sue, and he is unable to access pro-bono counsel, we will pay the legal bills to defend him in court.

If FFRF wants a showdown over this issue, let them sue the Catholic League for erecting its nativity scene in Central Park. Good luck with that.

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