

EMPIRE STATE BLDG. OWNERS SUED



Bill Donohue comments on a lawsuit brought by two Muslims from Long Island against the owners of the Empire State Building:

Last July, Fahad and Amina Tirmizi and their two children went to the observation deck on the 86th floor of the Empire State Building, dressed in traditional Muslim garb, and took a moment to recite the evening prayers in a spot away from other visitors. Two security guards confronted them and forced them to leave, saying they had no right to pray there. The lawyer for the Muslims, Phil Hines, has now sued the owners, Malkin Properties, and others, for this incident. We stand with Hines and his clients.

On August 26, 2010, I led a rally of over 3,000 people in the street across from the Empire State Building to protest Anthony Malkin's (the principal owner) refusal to light the towers blue and white on the 100th anniversary of Mother Teresa's birthday. He had no problem honoring the anniversary of the Communist Chinese government, even though Mao and his minions murdered 77 million innocent men, women, and children, but he could not stomach any recognition of Mother Teresa. Now he is bullying Muslims.

Muslims who pray in public, including in public accommodations, are simply exercising their constitutional rights. In play are two First Amendment rights: freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

We hope that Hines investigates the extent to which security guards are expected to censor religious speech. We wish him,

and this innocent Muslim couple, well.