

GOV. PATAKI MAKES RIGHT CHURCH-STATE DECISION

In the wake of a fire that devastated New York's Central Synagogue on August 28, Governor George Pataki ordered a state of emergency that allows the congregation to use the New York State Armory on Park Avenue; access was granted for 10 days, from the eve of Rosh Hashanah on September 20 until Yom Kippur on September 29. The governor's order suspended state military law that prohibits the use of armories for religious purposes.

The league endorsed Pataki's with a comment to the media:

"Governor Pataki is to be commended for extending to the congregation of Central Synagogue the right to use the Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue. Only a separation of church and state fanatic would oppose this move. Which raises an interesting question: would the ACLU, People for the American Way and Americans for Separation of Church and State be as quiescent if the armory had been extended to the parishioners of St. Patrick's Cathedral in the wake of a similar disaster? Maybe an inquiring journalist will let us know.

"What's at stake in this issue is the proper *accommodation*, as opposed to sponsorship, of the state to church needs. That all of us can live with the governor's decision, and that the U.S. Constitution will not come undone in the meantime, is proof positive that those who have willfully distorted the meaning of the establishment clause are wrong once again.

"Congratulations to Governor Pataki and best wishes to the congregation of Central Synagogue."