

HOUSE CHAPLAIN LAWSUIT BY ATHEISTS ENDS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a lawsuit by atheists protesting traditional Congressional invocations:

The House of Representatives begins each legislative day with a prayer, a practice that has been observed since the First Continental Congress. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), comprised of religion-hating militant secularists, wants equal time: in 2016 they asked House Chaplain Father Patrick Conroy for the right to offer a “non-prayer” invocation. They were denied and then sued.

In October 2017, FFRF lost in federal district court. On Good Friday, they lost on an appeal to the D.C. Circuit Court. The three-judge panel said the Congress has the right to write its own internal rules. They also said that the plaintiff, FFRF co-president Dan Barker, failed to state a claim that the court could affirm.

The Catholic League addressed this issue in 2016 and 2017, noting the fraudulent nature of Barker’s argument. He told the district court in 2016 that he has been a minister for over four decades. But that doesn’t count. What counts is the fact that he long ago renounced his belief in God: He is a devout atheist.

Father Conroy saw right through Barker’s bogus bid to offer an invocation. He noted that any guest chaplain must be “ordained by a recognized body in the faith in which he/she practices.”

The Catholic priest stressed that this time-honored rule is taken seriously. “For example,” he said, “I do not invite member-recommended individuals who have obtained an Internet-generated ordination to serve as guest chaplains, even if they hold deep and long-standing religious beliefs.”

FFRF never stands for anything—it always stands against, or from—something. We hope they waste more of their money by appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court. Three strikes might just finish the entire organization.