

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE VIOLATES SUPREME COURT RULING

The U.S. Postal Service is in direct violation of a Supreme Court ruling on nativity scenes and menorahs. In Postal Operations Manual (POM) and Handbook PO-203 Revision, 221.528, section c, it explicitly states that menorahs are permissible in post offices but nativity scenes are not. The Post Office is under the erroneous impression that a menorah is not a religious symbol. Not only is this historically incorrect, it was definitively decided in Allegheny County v. ACLU, Greater Pittsburgh that a menorah is a religious symbol.

The Catholic League has filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity office of Hauppauge, New York, in support of a case filed by postal service employee George Cornwall (case #4A-117-1030-95). Mr. Cornwall seeks to have the aforementioned regulation overturned. Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following statement today:

In 1989 the Supreme Court ruled that a menorah, like a nativity scene, was a religious symbol. It allowed, affirming an earlier decision in Lynch v. Donnelly, the placement of religious symbols on public property, provided that they were accompanied by secular symbols. Yet POM and Handbook PO-203 Revision, 221 528, section c, fails to comply with this ruling. It bars nativity scenes, crosses and the Star of David on the grounds that they are religious symbols but finds as 'permissible' such items as stamps and stamp art, evergreen trees bearing non-religious ornaments, menorahs (when displayed in conjunction with other seasonal matter)...etc.

"Not only does this fly in the face of Allegheny County v. ACLU, Greater Pittsburgh, which held a menorah to be a religious symbol, it inexplicably states that a menorah must

be 'displayed in conjunction with other seasonal matter.' But if the menorah is not a religious symbol, then it is superfluous to maintain that it should be displayed with other secular symbols. That this escaped the logic of those who authorized the regulation is truly astonishing

"The Catholic League wants the U.S. Postal Service to realign its regulations to meet the letter of the law. It does not recommend that both nativity scenes and menorahs be banned from post offices, rather it seeks to accord a place for both religious figures, allowing, of course, provision for the mandated secular symbols that must accompany them.

"The Catholic League will not desist in its action until justice is done."

The Catholic League is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.