

ACLU Attacks Gov. Perry's Prayer Event

As Aug. 6 approaches, secular humanist opposition is mounting against Texas Gov. Rick Perry's The Response: A Call to Prayer for a Nation in Crisis.

Last week, the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a federal lawsuit aiming to block Perry from participating in the event at Houston's Reliant Stadium. Now, the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas is asking Perry and other officials to disclose the amount of tax-payer dollars and other state or local government resources used to promote the prayer event.

"We are concerned that Gov. Perry is using public office to endorse a sectarian religious event and to advance specific Christian beliefs," says Lisa Graybill, legal director of the ACLU of Texas. "We are seeking information on the degree to which state resources have been or will be used for the planning and promotion of this event and for state officials' participation in it."

Under the state's open records law, government officials have 10 business days to respond to open records requests. The ACLU of Texas expects a response on or before August 3.

But Perry, who may run for president in 2012, is getting support from fellow politicians and pastors alike.

Governor Paul LePage of Maine has issued a proclamation naming August 6 as a "Day of Prayer and Fasting for Our Nation." The Maine Legislative Prayer Caucus is urging Maine citizens to participate in The Response. And James O. Davis, cofounder of the Billion Soul Network, is convinced that Perry is following the Holy Spirit's leading.

"We need a sweeping, weeping, reaping revival in America," Davis says. "The sins that use to embarrass us now entertain us; the sins that use to amaze us now amuse us; the sins that use to make us weep now make us laugh; the sins that use to slink down back alleys now parade down main street. We will either have revival or face ruin in this generation."