

Angry Atheists Fight Near-Supernatural Ground Zero Cross: New Developments

From day one, angry atheists have made outlandish claims about the Ground Zero Cross—the two intersecting steel beams in the shape of a cross that was found in the wreckage of the World Trade Center following 9/11.

Not only have they made these absurd claims in public (calling it “offensive and repugnant”), they’ve made them in federal court. Now a federal appeals court is calling them out and demanding they provide a rational explanation as to how their “offense” constitutes a constitutional claim.

When the American Atheists first filed their lawsuit in state court seeking to have the cross torn down and removed from the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum, they actually asserted in their complaint that their members were experiencing “dyspepsia [upset stomach], symptoms of depression, headaches, anxiety, and mental pain and anguish” as a “direct and proximate result of the unconstitutional existence of the cross.”

When the case was removed from state to federal court, the angry atheists quickly dropped their bizarre claims about the cross causing them upset stomachs, but continued arguing that the mere “existence of the cross” was causing them “depression, headaches, anxiety, and mental pain and anguish.”

Reading their legal claims actually starts to make one wonder if these angry atheists, who vehemently oppose the very idea of the supernatural, are somehow ascribing near-supernatural power to the cross.

A federal court threw out their lawsuit last year.

Unsurprisingly, the immediate reaction of American Atheists President David Silverman was “We are angry.” On appeal, these angry atheists are arguing that they are “offended” by the Ground Zero Cross.

Now a federal appeals court is demanding that this angry atheist group explain just how their “offense” becomes a constitutional crisis. As Fox News explains:

The judge has now given the plaintiffs until July 14 to file supplemental legal briefs before deciding whether the case will proceed. Among the questions that must be answered in the new filings is how the offensiveness of the cross, which the plaintiffs view as a Christian symbol for all 9-11 victims, becomes a “constitutional injury.”

The other question is—if the plaintiffs indeed feel displaying the cross “marginalizes them as American citizens”—then how is that a “particular and concrete injury” compared to just “the abstract stigmatization of atheists generally.”

The judge has also asked the plaintiffs to substantiate their claim the museum and Sept. 11 memorial are getting taxpayer dollars.

The court is exactly right. As we argued in our amicus brief before the court on behalf of over 230,000 Americans, “Offended observers (even observers whose offense is so great that they claim physical illness) cannot be permitted to rewrite history or constitutional precedent. Acknowledging history does not establish a religion, and Plaintiffs-Appellants’ lawsuit is without merit.”

The fact remains that the cross is an actual piece of 9/11 history that really meant something to real people (the first responders who said it gave them hope as they valiantly worked in the days following the terrorist attacks). No amount of

angry atheist offense will change this fact.

These angry atheists will have a hard time convincing the court otherwise. We'll continue to keep you updated as this case continues.

This article is crossposted on *Red State*.