

Atheists Attack World Trade Center Memorial Cross

The World Trade Center Memorial seems like a logical place to erect a symbol of Christianity. But an atheist group is challenging the cross at this historic location.

American Atheists wants to tear down the World Trade Center cross at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City and has filed a lawsuit, *American Atheists v. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey*, in New York state court Monday. But Christian legal experts say the attempt is completely out of step with the Constitution.

“One atheist group’s agenda shouldn’t diminish the sacrifice made by the heroes of 9/11,” says ADF Senior Counsel Byron Babione. “A cross like this one simply does not amount to a government establishment of religion under either the U.S. Constitution or the New York Constitution.

“The cross is not only known far and wide as a religious symbol, but also as a symbol of death, remembrance and honor for the dead. Americans have long recognized this. Nothing in the Constitution authorizes atheists to scour the landscape on a mission to seek and destroy memorial crosses.”

The American Center for Law and Justice plans to file a friend-of-the-court brief backing the legality of the Ground Zero cross on behalf of a former 9/11 firefighter and first responder.

“This is another pathetic attempt to rewrite the Constitution and rewrite history by removing a symbol that serves as a powerful remembrance to that fateful attack nearly 10 years ago,” says Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the ACLJ. “This lawsuit is deeply flawed and without merit. It is just the latest chapter of an anti-God strategy employed by atheist

organizations across the country—a strategy offensive to millions of Americans, a strategy that we’re confident will ultimately fail in court.”

The ACLJ’s amicus brief supports the legitimacy of the cross, formed by two intersecting steel beams that withstood the Twin Towers’ collapse on Sept. 11, 2001. Among those represented by the ACLJ in its brief is former NYC firefighter and first responder Tim Brown, who lost nearly 100 friends in the attack.

“We will aggressively defend the placement of this cross,” says Sekulow. “This memorial, a powerful part of the history of 9/11, serves as a constitutionally-sound reminder of the horrors that occurred nearly a decade ago.”