

Alabama School Removing 'Silent Night' from Christmas Program

An Alabama school district is trying to remove the traditional Christmas carol "Silent Night" from a Christmas program at one of its schools. The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) wrote a letter hoping to change the district's view. The letter explains that demands made by Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) for the removal of the song are baseless.

"It's ridiculous that people have to think twice about whether it's okay to include 'Silent Night' in a Christmas program," says ADF senior counsel David Cortman. "An overwhelming majority of Americans agree that it's okay to celebrate Christmas in schools and in the public square, and they are right. There is nothing unconstitutional about inclusion of this song in the school's program, and that is supported by how the courts have consistently ruled."

AU sent a letter to Tuscumbia City Schools complaining about inclusion of "Silent Night" as one of nine songs in G.W. Trenholm School's Christmas program. AU apparently claimed that inclusion of the song or any other religious song would be unconstitutional.

"The school should not succumb to pressure from the faulty legal demands of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, which spends its time threatening and intimidating school districts with disinformation to further its own constitutionally incorrect agenda," says ADF Litigation Staff Counsel Matt Sharp.

The ADF letter disputes AU's claims and points out several court cases that have upheld the inclusion of religious Christmas carols in school Christmas programs.

“Here, ‘Silent Night’ is but one of the nine other songs included in the Christmas program at G.W. Trenholm,” the ADF letter explains. “Thus, as long as the inclusion of ‘Silent Night’ or any other religious Christmas song is based upon a secular reason—i.e. recognition of the religious heritage of Christmas—then the Constitution does not prohibit the inclusion of the religious song in the school’s Christmas program.”