

ACLU, Satanic Temple Sue Iowa Over Rejected Capitol Holiday Event

The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa has filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of The Satanic Temple after state officials rejected the organization's proposed holiday event inside the Iowa Capitol.

The lawsuit accuses Iowa Department of Administrative Services Director Mark Campbell and forum Director Adam Steen of violating the group's constitutional rights, Breitbart reported.

In a press release, the ACLU said officials repeatedly denied The Satanic Temple permission to hold what it described as a "family-friendly winter holiday event" in the Capitol rotunda.

The organization planned to offer caroling, crafts and a Krampus costume contest. Krampus is a half-goat, half-demon figure from Central European folklore that traditionally punishes misbehaving children during the Christmas season.



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Matt Kezhaya, general counsel for The Satanic Temple, said officials expressed concern that costumed participants carrying sticks would strike children.

"The state said that we were going to beat children with sticks because we were going to have a costume contest which involved people holding sticks," Kezhaya said. He added that the Iowa congregation "was very emphatic that wasn't going to happen."

The lawsuit argues that the group should receive the same access to the Capitol as other religious and civic organizations.

The legal fight follows a 2023 controversy in which The Satanic Temple installed a Baphomet display inside the Iowa Statehouse. The display brought deep concern to many across the country.

Christian U.S. Navy veteran Michael Cassidy later destroyed the statue and turned himself in to authorities.

Cassidy said he acted to “awaken Christians to the anti-Christian acts promoted by our government.”

“The world may tell Christians to submissively accept the legitimization of Satan, but none of the founders would have considered government sanction of Satanic altars inside Capitol buildings as protected by the First Amendment,” Cassidy said.

The Satanic Temple has also promoted abortion and helped establish abortion facilities, according to Breitbart.

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