

Americans Defend Ground Zero Cross From Atheist Attacks

More than 190,000 Americans are urging a federal court to dismiss a lawsuit filed by an atheist organization that is trying to remove a cross memorial at The National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York City.

The cross is fashioned by two intersecting steel beams that survived the Twin Towers' collapse on 9/11.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) filed an amicus brief earlier this week.

"The legal arguments of the atheist organization are both offensive and absurd," says **Jay Sekulow**, chief counsel of the ACLJ. "We've heard from more than 190,000 Americans who support the ground zero cross and understand that this symbol provides hope and comfort for a nation that survived the tragic attacks of September 11th. We're confident the court will reject the flawed arguments challenging this cross and determine that this memorial is not only constitutional, but an appropriate exhibit for the museum."

American Atheists filed a federal suit claiming the cross is unconstitutional. They assert they are suffering both physical and emotional damages from the mere existence of the cross, resulting in headaches, indigestion, even mental pain.

In the amicus brief filed on Monday in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, the ACLJ contends the decision to include the cross is a permissible exercise of free speech and does not represent a violation of the Establishment Clause.

The brief contends: "Plaintiffs' lawsuit represents a dangerous and unprecedented attempt to literally rewrite

history and cleanse the record of a historically significant artifact. In the days and weeks following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the challenged **World Trade Center Cross** (the “Cross”) had a widely documented and positive effect on the First Responders at the Ground Zero site. It is entirely appropriate and lawful for the curators of a museum to acknowledge the cross’s actual, historic role by placing it in the September 11 Memorial Museum.”

In urging the court to dismiss the suit, the ACLJ concludes that “a museum—public or private—has the academic freedom to display religiously themed artifacts of historical or artistic significance.” In its brief, posted here, the ACLJ represents itself and more than 190,000 Americans who signed on to the Committee to Protect the **Ground Zero Cross**.