

Christian Intercessors Bow to Satanist's Threat as Persecution Rises

Coral Springs City Commission eliminated government meeting prayer altogether rather than invoking Satan as one man requested.

"I don't think our citizens would be in favor of Satanic invocations before City Commission meetings," Coral Springs Mayor Skip Campbell tells the *Sun Sentinel*.

Chaz Stevens, an activist who has claimed both atheism and satanism, petitioned the Coral Springs City Commission to lift a prayer up—or down?—to Satan.

But if he were to pray, as the *Sun Sentinel* reports, it wouldn't be with his head bowed and eyes closed.

"Contrary to the city's policy, your numerous emails indicate that you ... intend to make a mockery of the proceedings, by, as you indicated, 'twerking' and/or bringing a mariachi band to perform," reads an email from the city clerk.

Stevens claims it's religious discrimination.

"The really subtle point here is they didn't want to hear what I had to say: 'If you're not Jewish, or you're not a Christian, go home,' " Stevens tells the *Sun Sentinel*. "My project is named Satan or Silence. That sums it up."

Stevens began his pursuit of government-sanctioned prayer during meetings after the Supreme Court ruled in 2014 government meetings could include prayer.

"As a practice that has long endured, legislative prayer has become part of our heritage and tradition, part of our

expressive idiom, similar to the Pledge of Allegiance, inaugural prayer, or the recitation of 'God save the United States and this honorable court' at the opening of this court's sessions," Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote after the ruling.

Stevens' efforts also silenced prayers in Deerfield Beach, Florida, last year.

"I believe in God. I believe in Jesus Christ," Deerfield Commissioner Joe Miller said then. "But that doesn't mean I don't welcome my Jewish brother and my nonbelieving brother ... We are elected to serve the public, atheists, Satanists, Jewish, everyone."

Florida isn't alone in dealing with non-Christian prayers.

In North Carolina, a Muslim offered a prayer to Allah, during which one of the commissioners stormed out.

In Alabama, a Wiccan priest opened a city council meeting with an invocation to the "gentle goddess and loving god."