

Federal Judge: Police Officers Cannot Pray in Public

The city council of Ocala, Florida, has decided to fight back after a federal judge ruled that the city and its police chief violated the Constitution by promoting and holding a prayer vigil.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Corrigan ruled in May that Police Chief Greg Graham and city leaders broke the Establishment Clause by organizing, promoting and holding a 2014 prayer vigil after a drive-by shooting injured several children.

“The government cannot initiate, organize, sponsor or conduct a community prayer vigil,” Judge Corrigan wrote in his order. “That is what happened here.”

The American Humanist Association represented several local residents who were allegedly triggered and suffered microaggressions as a result of the vigil.

The lawsuit claimed the police chief was “reckless and callously indifferent” because of his involvement in the planning and promotion of the event.

The chief and the city were ordered to pay \$3 in damages plus attorney fees, **reported**.

The city council filed a motion to vacate the judgement.

Mayor Kent Guinn told Fox News that about 600 people showed up to pray “for the children that got shot in the drive by shooting.”

Renowned evangelist Franklin Graham said prayer is a basic human right and public employees should be able to petition

the Almighty.

"George Washington prayed, Abraham Lincoln prayed, and other presidents have called on God publicly in times of war or crisis," the president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse tweeted.

"Atheists have the right not to believe and not to call on God," he said. "People of faith have the right to pray, and it should not be taken away."

But AHA legal director David Niose said prayer rallies should be run by churches, not police departments.

"Police departments shouldn't be endorsing religion, yet that's exactly what the Ocala Police Department did here by sponsoring and promoting a prayer vigil," he said in a statement.

It really takes a perverted kind of reprobate to sue a police department for participating in a prayer vigil.

Have mercy.