



Greenfield City Council  
Attn: Harvey Everhart, Chairman  
300 Jefferson Street  
P.O. Box 300  
Greenfield, Ohio 45123

June 19, 2008

*Sent via fax to (937) 981-7242 and U.S. mail*

Mr. Everhart:

It has been brought to the attention of the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio Foundation that Greenfield City Council opens every City Council meeting with a sectarian prayer. Sponsoring and conducting a religious prayer service in City Council meetings is unconstitutional. Council's acts of organizing, sponsoring, and conducting an overtly religious, explicitly Christian, prayer violate the doctrine of separation of church and state, and constitute an establishment of religion, in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held in 2004 that the town council violated the Establishment Clause in opening council sessions with prayers that contained references to Jesus Christ and thus promoted one religion over all others. *Wynne v. Town of Great Falls, South Carolina*, (4th Cir. Ct. App., 2004). The government cannot demonstrate a preference for one particular sect or creed (including a preference for Christianity over other religions, or even religion over non-religion).

Greenfield must immediately cease enforcing the prayer at the opening of official City Council meetings. If this request is not promptly accepted, the ACLU of Ohio will begin to explore legal action in order to compel the city of Greenfield to cease using the prayer in order to comply with constitutional standards.

I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Gamso  
Legal Director  
ACLU of Ohio Foundation  
(216)472-2220

Cc: Conrad A. Curren, Law Director

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