



## City of Largo, Florida

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April 20, 2009

### Via Regular U.S. Mail

Ms. Rebecca S. Kratz, Esquire  
Freedom From Religion Foundation  
Post Office Box 750  
Madison, WI 33701

Re: City of Largo - 33rd Annual Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast

Dear Ms. Kratz:

I am in receipt of your letter addressed to Largo Mayor Patricia Gerard regarding the upcoming Interfaith Prayer Breakfast that will take place on May 4, 2009. Your letter indicates you act on behalf of "several City of Largo residents and other Florida members of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF)" who have concerns regarding the Mayor's hosting of such an event. You cite to the First Amendment Establishment Clause in support of your opinion that the City's advertisement, planning and support of the Prayer Breakfast is inappropriate.

In an effort to address the concerns you have raised, I believe some clarification regarding the purpose and planning of this event is warranted. First, this is an *interfaith* event that has been hosted by the Mayor of this City for 33 years. It is held in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer and does not promote any specific belief, faith or practice. Carlos Pena, a member of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team, is the keynote speaker attending this event. He is highlighted for his dedication both to his team and the residents/fans living in the Tampa Bay area. He is not speaking on behalf of any particular organization, religious or otherwise.

The City operates with strong reverence to and familiarity with the United States Constitution and the rights afforded to the citizens of this City by virtue of that document. The Prayer Breakfast does not operate in any capacity that would constitute a violation of the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution or any oath of office taken to protect and defend that document. It does not alienate any person or his/her specific belief, faith or practice but acts to support the community as a whole. The money and in-kind contributions collected from ticket sales and sponsorships for this event are not donated to or otherwise offered to any religious institution. They are utilized solely to cover the costs of the event.

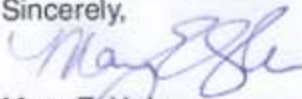
The City of Largo does not stand alone in its efforts to foster fellowship, inspiration and understanding during these difficult times. Several cities throughout the United States and their mayors host such events, modeled after the National Prayer Breakfast.

I appreciate the time you have taken to voice your concerns regarding upcoming Mayor's Prayer

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION

Breakfast which will take place as scheduled. If you have any additional comments or concerns please address them to my attention.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Hale  
Staff Attorney

COPY

- c: Mayor Patricia Gerard  
Norton Craig, City Manager  
Alan S. Zimmet, City Attorney